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# THE PSYCHO-ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN

BY  
MELANIE KLEIN

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION  
BY  
ALIX STRACHEY

PUBLISHED BY LEONARD & VIRGINIA WOOLF AT THE  
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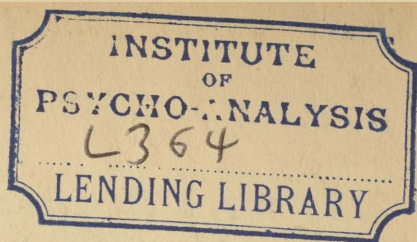


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TO THE MEMORY OF  
KARL ABRAHAM  
IN GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION



'SOMETIMES we may feel dismayed in face of the mass of phenomena which meets us in the wide field of human mentality, from the play of children and other typical products of the early activity of phantasy, through the first development of the child's interests and talents, up to the most highly valued achievements of mature human beings and the most extreme individual differentiations. But then we must remember that Freud has given us in the practice and theory of Psycho-Analysis an instrument with which to investigate this wide subject and to open up the road to infantile sexuality, that inexhaustible source of life.'

ABRAHAM, *Selected Papers*, p. 406.

## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is based on the observations I have been able to make in the course of my psycho-analytic work with children. My original plan was to devote the first part of it to a description of the technique I have elaborated and the second to a statement of the theoretical conclusions to which my practical work has gradually brought me, and which now seem in their turn well fitted to assist the technique I employ. But in the course of writing this book—a task which has extended over several years—the second part has outgrown its limits. In addition to my experience of Child Analysis, the observations I have made in analysing adults have led me to apply my views concerning the earliest developmental stages of the child to the psychology of the adult as well, and I have come to certain conclusions which I shall bring forward in these pages as a contribution to the general psycho-analytic theory of the earliest stages of the development of the individual.

That contribution is in every respect based on the body of knowledge transmitted to us by Freud. It was by applying his findings that I gained access to the minds of small children and could analyse and cure them. In doing this, moreover, I was able to make those direct observations of early developmental processes which have led me to my present theoretic conclusions. Those conclusions contain a full confirmation of the knowledge Freud has gained from



the analysis of adults, and are an endeavour to extend that knowledge in one or two directions.

If this endeavour should in any way be successful, and if this book should really add a few more stones to the growing edifice of psycho-analytic knowledge, my first thanks would be due to Freud himself, who has not only raised that edifice and placed it on foundations that will allow of its further elaboration, but who has always directed our attention to those points where the new work should properly be added.

I should next like to mention the part which my two teachers, Dr. Sándor Ferenczi and Dr. Karl Abraham, have played in furthering my psycho-analytic work. Ferenczi was the first to make me acquainted with Psycho-Analysis. He also made me understand its real essence and meaning. His strong and direct feeling for the unconscious and for symbolism, and the remarkable *rapproch* he had with the minds of children, have had a lasting influence on me in my understanding of the psychology of the small child. He also pointed out to me my aptitude for Child Analysis, in whose advancement he took a great personal interest, and encouraged me to devote myself to this field of psycho-analytic therapy, then still very little explored. He furthermore did all he could to help me along this path, and gave me much support in my first efforts. It is to him that I owe the beginnings of my work as an analyst.

In Dr. Karl Abraham I had the great good fortune to find a second teacher with the faculty of inspiring his pupils to put out their best energies in the service of Psycho-Analysis. In Abraham's opinion the progress of Psycho-Analysis depended upon each individual analyst—upon the value of his work, the quality of his character and the level of his scientific attainments. These high standards have been before my mind, when, in this book on Psycho-



Analysis, I have tried to repay some part of the great debt I owe to that science. Abraham fully grasped the great practical and theoretic possibilities of Child Analysis. At the First Conference of German Psycho-Analysts at Würzburg in 1924, in summing up a report I had read upon an obsessional neurosis in a child,<sup>1</sup> he declared in words that I shall never forget: 'The future of Psycho-Analysis lies in Play Analysis'. My study of the mind of the small child brought certain facts before me which seemed strange at first sight. But the confidence in my work which Abraham expressed encouraged me to go forward on my way. My theoretic conclusions are a natural development of his own discoveries, as I hope this book will show.

In the last few years my work has received the most whole-hearted support from Dr. Ernest Jones. At a time when Child Analysis was still in its first stages, he foresaw the part it would play in the future. It was at his invitation that I gave my first course of lectures in London in 1925 as a guest of the British Psycho-Analytical Society; and these lectures have given rise to the first part of my present book. (A second course of lectures, entitled 'Adult Psychology viewed in the light of Child Analysis', given in London in 1927, forms the basis of the second part.) The deep conviction with which Dr. Jones has made himself an advocate of Child Analysis has opened the way for this field of work in England. He himself has made important contributions to the problem of early anxiety-situations, the significance of the aggressive tendencies for the sense of guilt, and the earliest stages of the sexual development of woman. The results of his studies are in close touch with my own in all essential points.

I should like in this place to thank my other English fellow-workers for the sympathetic understanding and

<sup>1</sup> This report forms the basis of Chapter III. of this book.

cordial support they have given to my work. My friend Miss M. N. Searl, whose views agree with mine and who works along the same lines as myself, has done lasting service towards the advancement of Child Analysis in England, both from a practical and a theoretical point of view, and towards the training of child analysts. My thanks are also due to Mrs. James Strachey for her very able translation of the book, and to her and Mr. Strachey for the great assistance which their stimulating hints and suggestions have given me in its composition. My thanks are next due to Dr. Edward Glover for the warm and unfailing interest he has shown in my work, and for the way in which he has assisted me by his sympathetic criticism. He has been of special service in pointing out the respects in which my conclusions agree with the already existing and accepted theories of Psycho-Analysis. I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to my friend Mrs. Joan Riviere, who has given such active support to my work and has always been ready to help me in every way.

Last but not least, let me very heartily thank my daughter, Dr. Melitta Schmideberg, for the devoted and valuable help which she has given me in the preparation of this book.

MELANIE KLEIN

LONDON, *July* 1932.



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

**T**HIS book, under the title of *Die Psychoanalyse des Kindes*, has just (1932) been published in Vienna by the *Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag*. In the translation of certain chapters of it I am indebted to Miss I. Grant Duff, Mr. Adrian Stephen and my husband for the use of their draft renderings of an earlier version of the original. The Index is based upon the one made by Dr. Melitta Schmideberg for the German edition.

Particulars of all works referred to in the footnotes will be found under their authors' names in the bibliography at the end of the volume.

A. S.





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## INTRODUCTION

THE beginnings of Child Analysis go back more than two decades, to the time when Freud himself carried out his analysis of 'Little Hans'.<sup>1</sup> This first analysis of a child was of great theoretic importance in two respects. Its success in the case of a child of under five showed that psycho-analytic methods could be applied to small children; and, perhaps more important still, it was able fully to demonstrate, by direct contact with the child, the hitherto much-questioned existence of those infantile instinctual tendencies which Freud had discovered in the adult. In addition, the results obtained from it held out the hope that further analyses of small children would give us a deeper and more accurate knowledge of their psychology than analysis of adults had done, and would thus be able to make important and fundamental additions to the theory of Psycho-Analysis. But this hope remained unrealized for a long time. For many years Child Analysis continued to be a relatively unexplored region in the domain of Psycho-Analysis, both as a science and a therapy. Although several analysts, Dr. H. Hug-Hellmuth<sup>2</sup> in especial, have since undertaken analyses of children, no fixed rules as regards its technique or application have been evolved. This is doubtless the reason why the great practical and theoretical possibilities of Child Analysis have not yet been generally

<sup>1</sup> 'Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy' (1909).

<sup>2</sup> 'Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse' (1921).

appreciated, and why those fundamental principles and aspects of Psycho-Analysis which have long since been adopted in the case of adults have still to be laid down and proved where children are concerned.

It is only within the last twelve or thirteen years that more considerable work has been done in the field of Child Analysis. This has, in the main, followed two lines of development—one represented by Anna Freud and the other by myself.

Anna Freud has been led by her findings in regard to the ego of the child to modify the classical technique, and has worked out her method of analysing children in the latency period quite independently of my procedure. The theoretic conclusions she has come to are at variance with mine in certain fundamental respects. In her opinion children do not develop a transference-neurosis,<sup>1</sup> so that a fundamental condition for analytical treatment is absent. Moreover, she thinks that a method similar to the one employed for adults should not be applied to children, because their infantile ego-ideal is still too weak.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Unlike the adult, the child is not prepared to produce a new edition, as it were, of its love-relationships; the reason being that, to continue the metaphor, the original edition is not yet out of print. Its first objects, its parents, are still its love-objects in real life and not merely in imagination, as is the case with grown-up neurotics.' And again: 'The child has no need to exchange him' (the analyst) 'with its parents without more ado; for the analyst does not offer it all those advantages in comparison with its original objects which the adult patient gains who exchanges phantasy-objects for a real person' (*Einführung in die Technik der Kinderanalyse*, 1927, S. 56 and 58).

<sup>2</sup> The reasons she adduces are: 'the weakness of the child's ego-ideal, the dependence of its requirements, and hence of its neurosis, upon the external world, its inability to control the instincts that have been liberated within it and the consequent necessity the analyst is under of keeping it under his educational guidance' (S. 82). Again: 'In children, the negative tendencies they direct towards the analyst, illuminating as they so often are in many ways, are essentially inconvenient, and we must reduce them and weaken them as speedily as possible. It is in their positive relation to the analyst that truly valuable work will always be done' (S. 51).



These views differ from mine. My observations have taught me that children can quite well produce a transference-neurosis, and that a transference-situation arises just as in the case of grown-up persons, so long as we employ a method which is the equivalent of Adult Analysis, *i.e.* which avoids all educational measures and which fully analyses the negative impulses directed towards the analyst. They have also taught me that in children of every age it is very hard even for deep analysis to mitigate the severity of the super-ego. Moreover, in so far as it does so without having recourse to any educational influence, analysis not only does not weaken the child's ego, but actually strengthens it.

It would be an interesting task, no doubt, to compare these two lines of procedure in detail and with reference to the experimental data and to evaluate them from a theoretical point of view. But I must content myself in these pages with giving an account of my technique and of the theoretical conclusions which it has enabled me to come to. Relatively so little is known at present about the analysis of children that our first task must be to throw light on the problems of Child Analysis from various angles and to gather together the results so far obtained.





PART I  
THE TECHNIQUE OF CHILD ANALYSIS





## CHAPTER I

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHILD ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>

THE findings of Psycho-Analysis have led to the creation of a new Child Psychology. They have taught us that even in their earliest years children not only experience sexual impulses and anxiety, but undergo great disillusionments. Along with the belief in the asexuality of the child has perished the belief in the 'Paradise of Childhood'. Analysis of adults and direct observation of children have led us to these conclusions, and they are confirmed and amplified by the analysis of small children.

First let us, with the help of examples, form a picture of the mind of the young child as these early analyses reveal it. My patient Rita, who at the beginning of her treatment was two and three-quarter years old, had a preference for her mother till the end of her first year. After that she showed a markedly greater fondness for her father, together with a good deal of jealousy of her mother. For instance, when she was fifteen months old she used repeatedly to express a desire to be left alone in the room with her father and to sit on his knee and look at books with him. At the age of eighteen months her attitude changed once more and her mother was re-installed as the favourite. At the same time she began to suffer from night terrors and fear of animals. She grew more and more

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is an expanded version of my paper, 'The Psychological Principles of Infant Analysis' (1926).

strongly fixated upon her mother and developed an intense dislike of her father. At the beginning of her third year she became increasingly ambivalent and difficult to manage, until at last, at the age of two and three-quarters, she was brought to me to be analysed. At that time she had a very marked obsessional neurosis. She exhibited obsessive ceremonials and alternated between an exaggerated 'goodness', accompanied by feelings of remorse, and an uncontrollable 'naughtiness'. She had attacks of parathymia which showed all the signs of melancholic depression; and in addition she suffered from severe anxiety, an extensive inhibition in play, a total inability to tolerate any kind of frustration, and an excessive plaintiveness of disposition. These difficulties made the child almost impossible to manage.<sup>1</sup>

Rita's case clearly showed that the *pavor nocturnus* which appeared at the age of eighteen months was a neurotic elaboration of her Oedipus conflict. Her attacks of anxiety and rage, which turned out to be a repetition of her night

<sup>1</sup> Rita had shared her parents' bedroom until she was nearly two, and in her analysis she showed the consequences of having witnessed the primal scene. When she was two years old her brother was born, and this event led to the outbreak of her neurosis in its full force. Her analysis lasted for eighty-three sessions and was left unfinished, as her parents went to live abroad. In all important points it resulted in a quite considerable improvement. The child's anxiety was lessened and her obsessive ceremonials disappeared. Her depressive symptoms, together with her inability to tolerate frustrations, were a good deal moderated. At the same time as analysis lessened her ambivalence towards her mother and improved her relations to her father and brother, it reduced the difficulties of her upbringing to a normal level. I was able to convince myself at first hand of the lasting nature of the results of her analysis some years after its termination. I found then that she had entered upon the latency period in a satisfactory manner, and that her intellectual and characterological development were satisfactory. Nevertheless, when I saw her again I got the impression that it would have been advisable to have continued her analysis somewhat farther. Her whole character and nature showed unmistakable traces of an obsessional disposition. It must be remarked, however, that her mother suffered from a severe obsessional neurosis and had had an ambivalent relation towards the child from the first. One result of the changes for the better which analysis had effected in Rita was that her mother's attitude towards her had also greatly improved; but even so it was a severe handicap in the child's development. There is no doubt that if her analysis had been carried through to the end and her obsessional traits still farther cleared up, she would have enjoyed yet greater immunity from the neurotic and neurosis-inducing environment in which she lived. Seven years after the end of her treatment I heard from her mother that she was developing satisfactorily.



terrors, and her other difficulties as well, were very closely connected with strong feelings of guilt arising from that early conflict.<sup>1</sup>

We will now consider the content and the causes of these early feelings of guilt by reference to another case. Trude, aged three and three-quarters,<sup>2</sup> used repeatedly to pretend in her analysis that it was night-time and that we were both asleep. She then used to come softly over to me from the opposite corner of the room (which was supposed to be her own bedroom) and threaten me in various ways, such as that she was going to stab me in the throat, throw me out of the window, burn me up, take me to the police, etc. She would want to tie up my hands and feet, or she would lift up the rug on the sofa and say she was doing 'Po—Kaki—Kuki'. This, it turned out, meant that she wanted to look inside her mother's bottom for the '*Kakis*' (fæces), which signified children to her. On another occasion she wanted to hit me in the stomach and declared that she was taking out my 'A-as' (stool) and was making me poor. She then seized the cushions, which had repeatedly figured as children, and crouched down with them behind the sofa. There she exhibited every sign of fear, covered herself up, sucked her fingers and wetted herself. She used to repeat this whole process whenever she had made an attack on me. It corresponded in every detail with the way she had behaved in bed when, at a time when she was not yet two, she had been overtaken by very severe night terrors. At that time, too, she had run into her parents' bedroom again and again at night without being able to say what it was she wanted. Analysis showed that her wetting and dirtying herself were attacks upon her parents copulating with each other, and in this way removed the symptoms. Trude had wanted to rob her pregnant mother of her children, to kill her and to take her place in coitus with her father.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter VIII. I shall give fuller reasons for assuming that in these emotions the Oedipus conflict, or early stages of it, were already finding utterance.

<sup>2</sup> Here, as elsewhere, the age given denotes the age at which the child started analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Her sister had been born when she was two years old.



It was those impulses of hatred and aggression which, in her second year, had given rise to an unduly strong fixation upon her mother and to a sense of guilt which expressed itself, among other things, in her night terrors. Thus we see that the child's early anxiety and feelings of guilt have their origin in aggressive impulses connected with the Oedipus conflict.<sup>1</sup> At the time when Trude was most clearly exhibiting the behaviour I have described, she used to manage to hurt herself in some way almost every time before she came for her analytic hour. It turned out that the objects against which she had hurt herself—a table, a cupboard, a fireplace, etc.—signified, in accordance with primitive and infantile processes of identification, her mother or her father, who were punishing her.<sup>2</sup>

The play of children enables us to draw clear inferences as to the origin of this sense of guilt at an early age. Returning to our first case, we find that in her second year Rita was conspicuous for the remorse she used to feel for every small wrongdoing, and for her over-sensitiveness to reproach. For instance, she once burst into tears because her father uttered a laughing threat against a bear in her

<sup>1</sup> In the paper upon which this chapter is based ('The Psychological Principles of Infant Analysis', 1926) I had already put forward the view that impulses of hatred and aggression are the deepest cause and foundation of feelings of guilt; and since then I have brought fresh evidence in support of that opinion in a number of other writings. In my paper 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego', read at the Oxford Congress in 1929, I was able to give a more extended formulation of it. I said: 'It is only in the later stages of the Oedipus conflict that the defence against the libidinal impulses makes its appearance; in the earlier stages it is against the accompanying destructive impulses that the defence is directed'. This statement agrees in some points, I think, with the conclusions Freud has reached in his recent book *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), in which he says: 'So then it is, after all, only the aggression which is changed into guilt, by being suppressed and made over to the super-ego. I am convinced that very many processes will admit of much simpler and clearer explanation if we restrict the findings of psycho-analysis in respect of the origin of the sense of guilt to the aggressive instincts' (p. 131). And on the next page: 'One is now inclined to suggest the following statement as a possible formulation: when an instinctual trend undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are transformed into symptoms and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt'.

<sup>2</sup> A certain plaintiveness of disposition and a tendency to fall down or get hurt, things so common in small children in especial, are, according to my experience, effects of the sense of guilt.

picture-book. Her fear of her father's displeasure was enough to make her identify herself with the bear. The inhibition in play from which she suffered also proceeded from her sense of guilt. When she was only two and a quarter years old and used to play with her doll—a game which gave her little pleasure—she would repeatedly declare that she was not its mother. Analysis showed that she was not permitted to be its mother, because, among other things, it stood for her brother whom she had wanted to steal from her mother during the latter's pregnancy. The prohibition, however, did not proceed from her real mother, but from an introjected one who treated her with far more sternness and cruelty than the real one had ever done. Another symptom which Rita developed at the age of two was an obsessional one, a bed-time ritual which took up a lot of time. The main point of it was that she had to be tightly tucked up in the bed-clothes, otherwise a 'mouse or a *Butzen*' would get in through the window and bite off her own '*Butzen*'.<sup>1</sup> Her doll had to be tucked up too, and this double ceremonial became more and more elaborate and long-drawn-out and was performed with every sign of that compulsive attitude which pervaded her whole mind. On one occasion during her analytic hour she put a toy elephant next to her doll's bed so as to prevent it from getting up and going into her parents' bedroom and 'doing something to them or taking something away from them'. The elephant was taking over the rôle of her internalized parents whose prohibitive influence she felt ever since, between the age of one and a quarter and two, she had wished to take her mother's place with her father, rob her of the child inside her, and injure and castrate both parents. The meaning of the ceremonial now became clear: being tucked up in bed was to prevent her from getting up and carrying out her aggressive wishes against her parents. Since, however, she expected to be punished

<sup>1</sup> Rita's castration complex was manifested in a whole series of symptoms and also in her characterological development. Her play, too, clearly showed the strength of her identification with her father and her fear—arising from her castration complex—of failing in the masculine rôle.



for those wishes by a similar attack on herself by her parents, being tucked up also served as a defence against such attacks. The attacks were to be made, for instance, by the '*Butzen*' (her father's penis), which would injure her genitals and bite off her own '*Butzen*' as a punishment for wanting to castrate him. In these games she used to punish her doll and then give way to an outburst of rage and fear, thus showing that she was playing both parts herself—that of the powers which inflicted punishment and that of the punished child itself.

It is clear also that this anxiety refers not only to the child's real parents but also, and more especially, to its excessively stern introjected parents. What we meet with here corresponds to what we call the super-ego in adults.<sup>1</sup> The typical signs of the Oedipus complex, which are most pronounced when it has reached its maximum strength and which immediately precede its decline, are themselves only the final stage of a process which has been going on for years. Early analysis shows that the Oedipus conflict sets in as early as the second half of the first year of life and that at the same time the child begins to modify it and to build up its super-ego.

Finding, then, as we do, that even quite young children are under the weight of feelings of guilt, we have at least one very good ground of approach for their analysis. And yet many conditions for their successful treatment seem to be absent. Their relation to reality is a weak one; there is apparently no inducement for them to undergo the trials of an analysis, since they do not as a rule feel ill; and lastly, and most important of all, they cannot as yet give, or cannot give in a sufficient degree, those associations of speech which are the principal instrument of an analytic treatment of adults.

Let us take this last objection first. It was the very differences between the infantile mind and the grown-up one that showed me, in the first instance, the way to get at the

<sup>1</sup> In the writer's opinion the child's earliest identifications should already be called a super-ego. The reasons for this view will be given in Chapter VIII.



associations of the child and to understand its unconscious. These special characteristics of the child's psychology have furnished the basis of the technique of Play Analysis which I have been able to work out. The child expresses its phantasies, its wishes and its actual experiences in a symbolic way through play and games. In doing so it makes use of the same archaic and phylogenetic mode of expression, the same language, as it were, that we are familiar with in dreams; and we can only fully understand this language if we approach it in the way Freud has taught us to approach the language of dreams. Symbolism is only a part of it. If we wish to understand the child's play correctly in relation to its whole behaviour during the analytic hour we must not be content to pick out the meaning of the separate symbols, striking as they often are, but must take into consideration all the mechanisms and methods of representation employed by the dream-work, never losing sight of the relation of each factor to the situation as a whole. Analysis of children has shown again and again how many different meanings a single toy or a single bit of play can have, and that we can only completely comprehend their meaning when we know their further connections and the general analytic situation in which they are set. Rita's doll, for instance, would sometimes stand for a penis, sometimes a child she had stolen from her mother and sometimes her own self. Full analytic results can only be obtained if we bring these play-elements into their true relation with the child's sense of guilt by interpreting them down to the smallest detail. The whole kaleidoscopic picture, often to all appearances quite meaningless, which children present to us in a single analytic hour—the content of their games, the way in which they play, the means they use (for sometimes they will assign the various rôles to their toys, sometimes to themselves) and the motives behind a change of game—why, let us say, they will stop playing with water and start cutting out in paper or drawing—all these things are seen to have method in them and will yield up their meaning if we interpret them as we do

dreams. Very often children will express in their play the same thing that they have just been telling us in a dream, or will bring associations to a dream in the play which succeeds it. For play is the child's most important medium of expression. If we make use of this play technique we soon find that the child brings as many associations to the separate elements of its play as adults do to the separate elements of their dreams. These separate play-elements are indications to the trained observer; and as it plays, the child talks as well, and says all sorts of things which have the value of genuine associations.

It is surprising how children will sometimes accept the interpretation put forward with facility and even with marked pleasure. The reason undoubtedly is that in certain strata of their mind communication between the conscious and the unconscious is as yet comparatively easy, so that the way back to the unconscious is much simpler to find. Interpretation often has rapid effects, even when it does not appear to have been taken in consciously. Such effects show themselves in the way in which they enable the child to resume a game it has broken off in consequence of the emergence of an inhibition, and to change and expand it, bringing deeper layers of the mind to view in it. And as anxiety is thus resolved and pleasure in play restored, analytic contact, too, becomes securely established once more. Interpretation increases the child's pleasure in play by rendering unnecessary the expenditure of energy it has been making in order to maintain repression. On the other hand, we sometimes encounter resistances which are very hard to overcome. This most usually means that we have come up against the child's anxiety and sense of guilt belonging to deeper layers of its mind.

The archaic and symbolic forms of representation which the child employs are associated with another primitive mechanism. In its play it acts instead of speaks. Action, which is more primitive than thought or words, forms the chief part of its behaviour. In his 'History of an Infantile



Neurosis', Freud writes on p. 475: 'An analysis which is conducted upon a neurotic child itself must, as a matter of course, appear to be more trustworthy, but it cannot be very rich in material; too many words and thoughts have to be lent to the child, and even so the deepest strata may turn out to be impenetrable to consciousness'. If we approach the child-patient with the technique of adult analysis it is quite certain that we shall not penetrate to those deepest levels; and yet it is upon doing this that, for the child no less than for the adult, the success and value of analysis depends. But if we take into consideration the ways in which the child's psychology differs from that of the adult—the fact that its unconscious is as yet in close contact with its conscious and that its most primitive impulses are at work alongside of highly complicated mental processes—and if we can correctly grasp the child's mode of thought and expression, then all these drawbacks and disadvantages vanish and we find that we may expect to make as deep and as extensive an analysis of the child as of the adult. More so, in fact. For the child can actually recover and present to us in a direct way certain experiences and fixations which the adult can often only produce as reconstructions.<sup>1</sup>

In a paper read before the Salzburg Congress in 1924,<sup>2</sup> I put forward the view that behind every form of play-activity lies a process of discharge of masturbatory phantasies, operating in the form of a continuous impulse to play; that this process, acting as a repetition-compulsion, constitutes a fundamental mechanism in children's play and in all their subsequent sublimations; and that inhibitions in play and work spring from an unduly strong repression of those phantasies and, with them, of the whole imaginative life of the child. The child's sexual

<sup>1</sup> The reason why, in the writer's opinion, Early Analysis offers one of the most fruitful fields for psycho-analytic therapy, is precisely because the child has the ability to represent its unconscious in a direct way, and thus not only to experience a far-reaching emotional abreaction but actually to live through the original situation in its analysis, so that with the help of interpretation its fixations can to a considerable extent be resolved.

<sup>2</sup> Not published.



experiences are linked up with its masturbatory phantasies and obtain representation and abreaction along with them in its play. Among such re-enacted experiences the primal scene plays a very important part and generally occupies the foreground of the picture in early analyses. It is, as a rule, only after a good deal of analysis has been done and both the primal scene and the child's genital trends have been to some extent uncovered that we come to representations of its pre-genital experiences and phantasies. For instance, Ruth, aged four and a quarter, had, as an infant, been insufficiently fed for a considerable time because her mother had not had enough milk. In her games with me she used to call the water-tap the 'milk-tap'. When the water ran down through the holes in the waste-pipe she would say that milk was going into the 'mouths', but that only very little was going into them. She showed her unsatisfied oral desires in countless games and make-believes and in her whole attitude of mind. She would declare, for instance, that she was poor, that she only had one overcoat, that she didn't get enough to eat, etc.—all of which was quite untrue.

In the case of Erna, a six-year-old obsessional patient, the impressions she had received from her training in cleanliness<sup>1</sup> had had a lot to do with her neurosis, and in her analysis she brought them before my eyes in the greatest detail. For instance, she sat a small doll down on a brick and made it defaecate in front of a row of other admiring dolls. She then repeated the same theme, but this time we had to play the parts ourselves. I had to be a baby which was dirtying itself and she was the mother. She admired and petted the baby for what it had done. Then she became angry and suddenly played the part of a severe governess who was ill-treating the child. In this scene she was portraying to me what she had felt in her early childhood when her nursery training had begun and she had believed that she was losing the excessive love she had enjoyed as a baby.

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of Erna's case will be given in Chapter III.

We cannot in child analysis rate too highly the importance of the child's actions and phantasies as products of the repetition compulsion. The small child, of course, uses action most of all, but even the older one is constantly having recourse to this primitive mechanism. The pleasure he gets in this way provides the necessary stimulus for him to continue his analysis. But that pleasure gain should never be more than a means to an end.

When the analysis has been started and a certain amount of anxiety has been resolved in the small patient by interpretation, the sense of relief he experiences as a consequence of it—often after only a few sessions—will help him to go on with the work. For, whereas he has hitherto had no incentive to be analysed, he has now got an insight into the use and value of such a procedure, and an insight of a kind which will be quite as effective a motive for being analysed as is the adult's insight into his illness. The capacity the child has for thus understanding the situation testifies to a surprising amount of contact with reality on his part. This is a point which deserves further discussion.

As the work of analysis proceeds we find that the child's relation to reality, at first so feeble, gradually gains in fulness and strength. The small patient will begin, for instance, to distinguish between his pretence mother and his real one, or between his toy brother and his live one. He will insist that he only meant to do this or that to his 'doll' brother, and that he loves his real brother very much. Only after very strong and obstinate resistances have been surmounted will he be able to see that his aggressive acts were aimed at the real, human object. But when he has come to understand this, young as he is, he will have made a very important advance in his adaptation to reality.

Concerning the small child's relations to reality, let me refer once more to Trude, my three-and-three-quarter-year-old patient. After having had only one analytic hour



with me she went abroad with her mother for six months. Then her analysis was resumed. The only occasion on which she said anything of all the things she had seen and done during her travels was some time later when she told me this dream: *She and her mother were back in Italy in a certain restaurant she knew, and the waitress didn't give her any raspberry syrup because there wasn't any left.* The interpretation of this dream showed, among other things,<sup>1</sup> that she had not got over her displeasure at the withdrawal of the mother's breast and her envy of her younger sister. Whereas she had reported to me all sorts of apparently unimportant daily events and had repeatedly alluded to small details out of her first analytic hour six months earlier, the only way in which she showed the slightest interest in her travels was in this allusion, arising out of the analytic situation, to the frustration she had suffered in infancy.

Neurotic children do not tolerate reality well, because they cannot tolerate frustrations. They seek to protect themselves from reality by denying it. But what is most important and decisive for their future adaptability to reality is the greater or less ease with which they tolerate those frustrations which arise out of the Oedipus situation. Even in quite small children, therefore, a too emphatic rejection of reality (often disguised under an apparent docility and adaptability) is an indication of neurosis and only differs from the adult neurotic's flight from reality in its form of expression. For this reason one of the results of early analysis should be to enable the child to adapt itself to reality. If this has been successfully done the child's educational difficulties will be lessened, for it will have become able to tolerate the frustrations entailed by reality.

<sup>1</sup> The dream was a punishment-dream. It proved to be based upon death-wishes derived from her oral frustration and her Oedipus situation and directed against her sister and mother, together with the sense of guilt resulting from those wishes. My analysis of very young children's dreams in general has shown me that in them, no less than in play, there are always present not only wishes but counter-tendencies coming from the super-ego, and that even in the simplest wish-dreams the sense of guilt is operative in a latent way.



We have now seen, I think, that in child analysis our angle of approach has to be somewhat different from what it is in the analysis of adults. Taking the shortest cut possible through the ego, we apply ourselves in the first instance to the child's unconscious and from there gradually get into touch with its ego as well. Analysis does much to strengthen the child's as yet feeble ego and help it to develop, by lessening the excessive weight of the super-ego, which presses on it far more severely than it does on the ego of full-grown persons.<sup>1</sup>

I have spoken of the rapid effect that interpretation has upon children and how this is observable in a great number of ways, such as the expansion of their play, the strengthening of their transference and decrease of their anxiety, etc. Nevertheless, they do not seem to deal with and work over such interpretations in consciousness for some time. This task, I found, was accomplished later on, and was bound up with the development of their ego and the growth of their adaptation to reality, with which it kept pace. The process of sexual enlightenment follows the same course. For a long time analysis does no more than bring out material connected with sexual theories and birth-phantasies. It only brings knowledge gradually by removing the unconscious resistances which work against it. Full sexual enlightenment, therefore, like a full adaptation to reality, is one of the consequences of a completed analysis. Without it no analysis can be said to have reached a successful termination.

In the same way as the mode of expression is different in the child, so is the analytic situation as a whole. And yet in both child and adult the main principles of analysis are the same. Consistent interpretation, steady resolution of

<sup>1</sup> Unlike the grown-up patient, the child cannot, after its recovery, alter the circumstances of its life. But analysis will have helped it very greatly if it has enabled it to get on better and to feel more cheerful in its actual environment. Furthermore, the removal of its own neurosis often has the effect of improving the behaviour of its *milieu*. It has been my experience that the mother will react in a much less neurotic way as soon as analysis has begun to effect favourable changes in her child.

the resistances, constant reference back of the transference, whether positive or negative, to earlier situations—these establish and maintain a correct analytic situation with the child no less than with the adult. A necessary condition for this achievement is that the analyst should refrain, as he does with adult patients, from exerting any kind of non-analytic and educational influence upon the child. He should deal with its transference on lines identical with his management of it in grown-up cases. He will then see the child's symptoms and difficulties become drawn in to the analytic situation in exactly the same way. Its former symptoms, or the difficulties and 'naughtiness' which correspond to them, will come out anew. It will, for instance, begin to wet its bed once more; or, in certain situations which repeat an earlier one, it will, even if it is three or four years old, start talking like a small child of one or two.

Seeing that children take in and digest their new knowledge mostly in an unconscious way, they will not be called upon on the strength of it to change their whole point of view in regard to their parents all at once. The alteration will be at first rather one of feeling. Knowledge dealt with in this gradual way has always, as far as my experience goes, been a great relief to the child and has greatly improved its relations towards its parents, so that it has become more socially adaptable and easier to bring up. The demands of its super-ego having been moderated by analysis, its ego, now less oppressed and consequently stronger, is able to carry them out more easily.

As analysis continues, children grow able to some extent to substitute for the processes of repression those of critical rejection. This is especially clearly seen when in a later stage of their analysis they become so detached from the sadistic impulses which once governed them, and to whose interpretation they opposed the strongest resistances, that they sometimes make fun of them. I have heard quite small children joke about the idea that they once really wanted to eat their Mummy up or cut her into



pieces.<sup>1</sup> The decrease of the sense of guilt which accompanies these changes also enables sadistic desires which were before entirely repressed to undergo sublimation. This comes out in the removal of inhibitions both in play and work and the appearance of a number of fresh interests and activities.

In this chapter I have taken as my point of departure my technique of Early Analysis, because it underlies the analytic methods I adopt with children of all ages. For in so far as the mental characteristics of the quite small child often still persist quite strongly in older ones, I have found it necessary to use the same technique for them as well. On the other hand, of course, the ego of the older child is more fully developed, so that that technique has to undergo some modification when it is applied to children in the latency period and at puberty. This subject will receive fuller attention later on and I shall therefore only dwell on it very briefly here. Whether such a modified technique will more nearly approximate to Early Analysis or to Adult Analysis depends not only upon the age of the child but upon the special character of the case.

Speaking generally, I am guided in my choice of analytic method for all periods of childhood by the following chief considerations. Children and young people suffer from a more acute degree of anxiety than do adults, and therefore we must gain access to their anxiety and to their unconscious sense of guilt and establish the analytic situation as rapidly as possible. In small children this anxiety usually finds an outlet in anxiety attacks; during the latency period it more often takes the form of distrust and reserve, while in the intensely emotional age of puberty it once more leads to acute liberation of anxiety which now, however, in conformity with the child's more developed

<sup>1</sup> This observation, that when their super-ego becomes less harsh children develop a sense of humour, is, I think, in full agreement with Freud's theory of the nature of humour, which, according to him, is the effect of a friendly super-ego. In concluding his paper on 'Humour' (1928) he says: 'Finally, if the super-ego does try to comfort the ego by humour and to protect it from suffering, this does not conflict with its derivation from the parental institution'.

ego, frequently finds expression in obstinate and violent resistances which may easily cause the analysis to be broken off. My experience is that the way to resolve some of this anxiety quickly in children of all ages is immediately and systematically to deal with the negative transference. In order to gain the necessary access to the child's phantasies and unconscious we must turn our attention to those methods of indirect symbolic representation which it employs at every age. Once the child's imagination has become more free as a consequence of its lessened anxiety, we have not only gained access to its unconscious but have also set in motion in an ever greater degree the means at its command for representing<sup>1</sup> its phantasies. And this holds good even in those cases where we have to start from material which appears to be completely devoid of imagination.

In conclusion I should like to sum up briefly what has been said in this chapter. The more primitive nature of the child's mind makes it necessary to find an analytic technique that shall be more especially adapted to it, and this we find in Play Analysis. By means of Play Analysis we gain access to the child's most deeply repressed experiences and fixations and are thus able to exert a radical influence on its development. The difference between our methods of analysis and those of Adult Analysis, however, is purely one of technique and not of principle. The analysis of the transference-situation and of the resistance, the removal of infantile amnesias and of the effects of repression, as well as the uncovering of the

<sup>1</sup> If we do this we shall succeed in making speech—as far as the child possesses that faculty—an instrument of its analysis. Even in quite small children the reason why we have to do without verbal associations for long periods of their analysis is not only because they cannot speak with ease but because the acute anxiety they suffer from only permits them to employ a less direct form of representation. Since the primary archaic mode of representation by means of toys and of action is an essential medium of expression for the child, we can certainly never carry out a thorough analysis of a child by means of speech alone. Nevertheless, I believe that no analysis of a child, whatever its age, can be said to be really terminated until the child has employed its powers of speech in analysis to its full capacity. For language constitutes one of the points of contact between the individual and the external world.



primal scene—all these things Play Analysis does. It therefore not only conforms to the same standards of psychoanalytic method as do adult analyses, but also leads to the same results. The only difference is that it suits its mode of procedure to the mind of the child.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TECHNIQUE OF EARLY ANALYSIS

**I**N the first chapter of this book I have tried to show, on the one hand, what special psychological mechanisms we find operative in the small child as distinct from the adult when we come to analyse it, and, on the other, what parallels exist between the two, and I have explained that it is at once these differences and these similarities which necessitate a special technique and which have led me to develop my method of Play Analysis.

On a low table in my analytic room there are laid out a number of small toys of a primitive kind—little wooden men and women, carts, carriages, motor-cars, trains, animals, bricks and houses, as well as paper, scissors and pencils. Even a child that is usually inhibited in its play will at least glance at the toys or touch them, and will soon give me a first glimpse into its complexive life by the way in which it begins to play with them or lays them aside, or by its general attitude towards them.

In order to get a clear idea of the principles of play technique let us turn to an actual case. Peter, aged three and three-quarters, was very difficult to manage. He was strongly fixated upon his mother and very ambivalent. He was unable to tolerate frustrations, was totally inhibited in play and gave the impression of being an extremely timid, plaintive and unboyish child. At times his behaviour would be aggressive and overbearing, and he got on badly with other children, especially with his younger brother. His analysis was intended to be chiefly a prophylactic



measure, since there had been several cases of severe neurosis in the family. But in the course of it I found that he was suffering from such a serious neurosis himself and from such a degree of inhibition that he would almost certainly not have been able to meet the demands of school life and would, sooner or later, have fallen ill.<sup>1</sup>

At the very beginning of his first hour Peter took the toy carriages and cars and put them first one behind the other and then side by side, and alternated this arrangement several times. He also took a horse and carriage and bumped it into another, so that the horses' feet knocked together, and said: 'I've got a new little brother called Fritz'. I asked him what the carriages were doing. He answered: 'That's not nice', and stopped bumping them together at once, but started again quite soon. Then he knocked two toy horses together in the same way. Upon which I said: 'Look here, the horses are two people bumping together'. At first he said: 'No, that's not nice', but then, 'Yes, that's two people bumping together', and added: 'The horses have bumped together too, and now they're going to sleep'. Then he covered them up with bricks and said: 'Now they're quite dead; I've buried them'. In his second hour he at once arranged the cars and carts in the same two ways as before—in Indian file and abreast; and at the same time he once again knocked two carriages together, and then two engines. He next put two swings side by side and, showing me the inner part that hung down and swung, said: 'Look how it dangles and bumps'. I then proceeded to interpret, and,

<sup>1</sup> I may add that at the end of his analysis, which took up 278 sessions, his difficulties had disappeared and there was an extensive change for the better in his whole character and disposition. He had lost not only his morbid fears but his general timidity and had become a happy and lively child. He had overcome his inhibition in play and had begun to get on well with other children, in particular with his little brother. His development since has been excellent. According to the latest accounts of him, six years after the end of his analysis, he was doing well at school, was full of interest in things, learned well, and was good at games. He was easy to manage and able to meet all the social requirements of his age. It is, moreover, worth noting that both during his analysis and in the next few years he had to undergo unnaturally great strains on account of various upheavals in his family life.

pointing to the 'dangling' swings, the engines, the carriages and the horses, explained that in each case they were two people—his Daddy and Mummy—bumping their 'thingummies' (his word for genitals) together.<sup>1</sup> He objected, saying: 'No, that isn't nice', but went on knocking the carts together, and said: '*That's* how they bumped their thingummies together'. Immediately afterwards he spoke about his little brother again. As we have seen, in his first hour, too, his knocking together of the two carriages and horses had been followed by his remarking that he had got a new little brother. So I continued my interpretation and said: 'You thought to yourself that Daddy and Mummy bumped their thingummies together and that made your little brother Fritz be born'. He now took another small cart and made all three collide together. I explained: 'That's your own thingummy. You wanted to bump it with Daddy's and Mummy's thingummies too.' He thereupon added a fourth cart and said: 'That's Fritz'. He next took two of the smaller carts and put each on to an engine. He pointed to a carriage and horse and said: 'That's Daddy', and to another and said: 'That's Mummy'. He pointed once more to the first carriage and horse and said: 'That's me', and to the second one and said: 'That's me too', thus illustrating his identification with both parents in coitus. After this he repeatedly hit the two small carts together and told me how he and his little brother let two chickens into their bedroom to keep them quiet, but that they had knocked about together and spat in there. He and Fritz, he added, were not rude gutter boys and did not spit. When I told him that the chickens were his and Fritz's thingummies bumping into one another and spitting—that is, masturbating—he agreed with me after a little resistance.

I can only refer briefly here to the way in which the child's phantasies as set forth in his play became more and more

<sup>1</sup> I always find out beforehand from the child's mother what special words the child uses for the genitals, excremental processes, etc., and adopt them in speaking to it. For purposes of clearness, however, I shall not reproduce these special words in my reports on further cases.



free under the influence of continual interpretation; how the scope of his play gradually widened; and how certain details in it were repeated over and over again until they were made clear by interpretation, and then gave place to fresh details. Just as associations to dream-elements lead to the uncovering of the latent content of the dream, so do the elements of children's play, which correspond to those associations, afford a view of its latent meaning. And play analysis, no less than adult analysis, by systematically treating the actual situation as a transference-situation and establishing its connection with the originally experienced or imagined one, gives them the possibility of completely living out and working through that original situation in phantasy. In doing this, and in uncovering their infantile experiences and the original causes of their sexual development, it resolves fixations and corrects errors of development that have disturbed their whole line of growth.

The next extract I shall give from Peter's case is intended to show that the interpretations made in the first hours were substantiated by further analysis. One day, a few weeks later, when one of the toy men happened to fall over, Peter flew into a rage. Immediately afterwards he asked me how a toy motor was made and why it could stand up. He next showed me a toy deer fall over, and then said he wanted to urinate. In the lavatory he said to me: 'I'm doing number one—I *have* got a thingummy'. When he was back in the room again he took a toy man, whom he called a boy, who was sitting in a little house, which he called the lavatory, and stood him in such a way that a dog which he placed beside him 'shouldn't see him and bite him'. But he placed a toy woman so that she could see him, and said: '*Only* his Daddy mustn't see him'. Thus it was evident that he identified the dog, which was in general an object of great fear to him, with his father and the defaecating boy with himself.<sup>1</sup> After this he kept on

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter I. I have given my reasons for the view that with children, no less than with adults, the analytic situation can only be established and maintained so long as a purely analytic attitude is maintained towards the patient. But in dealing with children certain modifications of this principle become necessary,

playing with the motor-car whose construction he had already admired, and made it move along. Suddenly he asked angrily: 'Whenever is it going to stop?' Next he said that some of the toy men he had been using must not ride in it, knocked them over, and set them up again with their backs to the car, next to which he once more put a whole row of cars and carriages, side by side this time. He then suddenly expressed a desire to pass stool, but contented himself with asking the sitting toy man (the defaecating boy) whether he had finished. He again turned to the motor-car and began to alternate incessantly between admiration and rage at its continual movement, wanting to pass stool and asking the 'boy' if he had done.

In the analytic hour just described, Peter had been depicting the following things: the toy man, the deer, etc., which kept on falling down, represented his own penis and its inferiority in comparison to his father's erect member. His going to make water immediately after was done to prove the contrary to himself and to me. The

without, however, in any way departing from its essentials. For instance, if a very small patient wants to go to the lavatory, and is still unused to doing so alone at home, it is my practice to go with him. But I do the least possible for him and wait outside the door until he has finished, being careful then, as on all other occasions, to preserve the attitude of friendly reserve which seems as necessary for the establishment and maintenance of the analytic situation in child analysis as it is in the analysis of adults. It is also essential to subject to analytic interpretation the gratification afforded to the patient by the analysis itself and the deeper motives that underlie his desire for such a gratification, and to bring them into line with the associations or play which immediately precede or follow them. In the case of Peter, for instance, after having made water and said: 'I'm doing number one—I *have* got a thingummy', he went on to play the game with the boy on the lavatory seat. Instructive as his remark was in itself, the details of the game which followed it were of still greater interest. These were that the father-substitute (the dog) was *not* to see the boy in the lavatory, but the woman *was* to see him; and from them we learn the causes of Peter's desire to urinate immediately before and his wish that I should be present while he did it. In the same way I always analyse very thoroughly the reasons why a child assigns this or that rôle to me in its games of make-believe, or requires this or that bit of help for itself or its dolls or animals. To what an extent we can establish the analytic situation in treating children can be seen, for instance, from the fact that it is the exception for even the youngest ones to carry out exhibitionist actions in reality, and that even during periods of the strongest positive transference it very seldom happens that a child will climb on to my lap or kiss and hug me. Incontinence is also a rare event in the analytic hour, even with very small children.



motor-car which would not stop moving and which aroused both his admiration and anger was his father's penis that was performing coitus all the time. After feeling admiration for it he became enraged and wanted to defaecate. This was a repetition of his passing stool at the time when he had witnessed the primal scene. He had done this so as to disturb his parents while they were copulating and, in imagination, to harm them with his excrements.

We must now try to get a rough idea of the general significance of Peter's first analytic hours in the light of these later interpretations. In putting the motor-cars end on together during his very first session, he was making reference to his father's powerful penis; in putting them side by side he was symbolizing the frequent repetition of coitus—that is, his father's potency—and he did this again later by means of the car that kept on moving. The rage he had felt at witnessing his parents' coitus was already expressed in his first hour by his wanting the two horses who were going to sleep to be 'dead and buried', and in the affect which accompanied that wish. That these pictures of the primal scene with which he began his analysis were referable to actual repressed experiences of his infancy was proved by his parents' own account to me. According to this, the child had only shared their bedroom during one period, when he was eighteen months old and they were away on their summer holidays. During that period he had become especially hard to manage. He had slept badly and had begun to be dirty again, although he had become almost clean in his habits several months before. It appeared that though the railings of his cot did not prevent him from seeing his parents have sexual intercourse, they made it more difficult, and this was symbolized by the toy men who were knocked over and then placed with their backs to the row of vehicles. The falling over of the toys also represented his own feelings of impotence. It appeared that before that summer holiday he used to play with his toys exceedingly well, but after it he could do nothing with them except break them. As early

as in his first analytic hour he illustrated the connection between the destruction of his toys and his observations of coitus. Once, when he had put the motor-cars, which symbolized his father's penis, in a row side by side and had made them run along, he lost his temper and threw them all about the room, saying: 'We always smash our Christmas presents straight away; we don't want any'. Smashing his toys thus stood in his unconscious for smashing his father's genitals. This pleasure in destruction and inhibition in play, which he brought into his analysis, were gradually overcome and disappeared together with his other difficulties during the course of it.

In uncovering bit by bit the primal scene I was able to gain access to Peter's very strong passive homosexual attitude. After having depicted his parents' coitus he had phantasies of coitus between three people. They aroused severe anxiety in him and were followed by other phantasies in which he was being copulated with by his father. These were portrayed in a game in which the toy dog or motor-car or engine—all signifying his father—climbed on to a cart or a man, which stood for himself. In this process the cart would be injured or the man would have something bitten off; and then Peter would show much fear of, or great aggressiveness towards, the toy which represented his father.

I shall now proceed to discuss some of the more important aspects of my technique in the light of the above extracts from an actual analysis. As soon as the small patient has given me some sort of insight into his complexes—whether through his games or his drawings or phantasies, or merely by his general behaviour—I consider that interpretation can and should begin. This does not run counter to the well-tried rule that the analyst should wait till the transference is there before he begins interpreting, because with children the transference takes place immediately, and the analyst will often be given evidence straight away of its positive nature. But should the child show shyness, anxiety or even only a certain distrust, such behaviour



is to be read as a sign of a negative transference, and this makes it still more imperative that interpretation should begin as soon as possible. For interpretation reduces the patient's negative transference by taking the negative affects involved back to their original objects and situation. For instance, when Rita,<sup>1</sup> who was a very ambivalent child, felt a resistance she at once wanted to leave the room, and I had to make an interpretation immediately so as to resolve this resistance. As soon as I had explained to her the cause of her resistance—always carrying it back to its original object and situation—it was resolved, and she would become friendly and trustful again and continue her game, supplying in its various details a confirmation of the interpretation I had just given.

In another instance I was able to see with impressive clearness the necessity of rapid interpretation. This was in the case of Trude, who, it will be remembered, came to me for a single hour when she was three and a quarter years old,<sup>2</sup> and then had to have her treatment postponed owing to external circumstances. This child was very neurotic and unusually strongly fixated upon her mother. She came into my room full of anxiety and ill-will, and I was obliged to analyse her in a low voice with the door open. But soon she had given me an idea of the nature of her complexes. She insisted upon the flowers in a vase being removed; she threw a little toy man out of a cart into which she had previously put him and heaped abuse on him; she wanted a certain man with a high hat that figured in a picture-book she had brought with her to be taken out of it; and she declared that the cushions in the room had been thrown into disorder by a dog. My immediate interpretation of these utterances in the sense that she desired to do away with her father's penis,<sup>3</sup> because it was playing havoc with

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Trude's uncommonly strong castration complex played a very conspicuous part and dominated the picture for some time in her analysis. From beneath that complex analysis brought to light a further anxiety which proved a more fundamental one—that of being attacked by her mother, robbed of the contents of her body and her children and severely injured internally. (See Chapter I.)

her mother (as represented by the vase, the cart, the picture-book and the cushion), at once diminished her anxiety and she left me in a much more friendly mood than she had come, and said at home that she would like to come back to me. When, six months later, I was able to resume this little girl's analysis once more, it appeared that she had remembered the events of her single hour of analysis and that my interpretations had effected a certain amount of positive transference, or rather, some lessening of the negative transference in her.

Another fundamental principle of play technique is that the interpretation must be carried down to a sufficient depth to reach the mental layer which is being activated. For instance, in his second hour, Peter, after having pushed the cars along, laid a toy man on a bench, which he called a bed, and then threw him down and said that he was dead and done for. He next did the same thing with two little men, choosing for the purpose two toys that were already damaged. At that time, in conformity with the current material, the interpretation I gave him was that the first toy man was his father, whom he wanted to throw out of his mother's bed and kill, and that the second man was himself to whom his father would do the same.<sup>1</sup> Later on, when I was bringing to light the primal scene in all its details, Peter recurred in various forms to the theme of the two broken men; but it now appeared that it was determined by the anxiety he had felt, in connection with the primal scene, in regard to his mother as the castrator. In his phantasy she had taken his father's penis inside herself and had not given it back; and she thus became an object of anxiety for the boy, because in his imagination she now carried his father's terrifying penis (= his father) inside herself.

Here is another example taken from the same case. In

<sup>1</sup> I may mention that this interpretation—like all interpretations of death-wishes in the analyses of children—aroused very violent resistances in Peter. But he brought a confirmation of it in his next hour when he suddenly asked: 'And if I were a Daddy and someone wanted to throw me down behind the bed and make me dead and done for, what would I think of it?'



Peter's second hour my interpretation of the material he had brought had been that he and his brother practised mutual masturbation. Seven months later, when he was four years and four months old, he told me a long dream, rich in associative material, from which the following is an extract. *'There were two pigs in a pig-sty and in his bed too. They ate together in the pig-sty. There were also two boys in his bed in a boat; but they were quite big, like Uncle G—— (a grown-up brother of his mother's) and E—— (an older girl friend whom he thought almost grown-up).'* Most of the associations I got for this dream were verbal ones. They showed that the pigs represented himself and his brother and that their eating meant mutual *fellatio*. But they also stood for his parents copulating together. It turned out that his sexual relations with his brother were based on an identification with his mother and father, in which Peter took the rôle of each in turn. After I had interpreted this material Peter started his next hour by playing games round the basin and taps. He put two pencils on a sponge and said: 'This is the boat that Fritz' (his younger brother) 'and I got in'. He then put on a deep voice—as he often did when his super-ego came into action—and shouted at the two pencils: 'You're not to go about together all the time and do disgusting things'. This scolding on the part of his super-ego at his brother and himself was also aimed at his parents (as represented by his Uncle G—— and his grown-up friend E——)<sup>1</sup> and set free in him affects of the same kind as he had felt towards them when he had witnessed the primal scene. These were the affects which he had already given vent to as early as in his second hour, when he wanted the horses that had bumped together to be dead and buried. And yet, after seven months, the analysis of that material was still in progress. It is clear, then, that my first deep-going interpretations had in no

<sup>1</sup> He had selected two long pencils out of a collection of all sizes, thus once more expressing the fact, already elicited by his associations on the day before, that the two culprits—the pigs—were not only himself and his brother but his parents too, and that in his mutual masturbation he was identifying himself and his brother with them.

way hindered the elucidation of the connections between that experience and the child's whole sexual development (and in particular of the way in which it determined the course of his relations with his brother), nor prevented a working through of the material involved.

I have brought forward the above examples in order to support my view, based on empiric observation, that the analyst should not be afraid of making a deep interpretation even at the start of the analysis, since the material belonging to the deep layers of the mind will come back again later and be worked through. As I have said before, the function of deep-going interpretation is simply to open the door to the unconscious, to diminish the anxiety that has been stirred up and thus to prepare the way for analytic work.

In these pages emphasis has repeatedly been laid upon the child's capacity for making a spontaneous transference. This is to some extent due, I think, to the much more acute anxiety which it feels in comparison with the adult and consequently its greater degree of apprehension. One of the greatest, if not *the* greatest psychological task which the child has to achieve, and which takes up the larger part of its mental energy, is the mastering of anxiety. Its unconscious is therefore primarily interested in objects from the point of view of whether they allay anxiety or excite it; and according as they do the one or the other it will have a positive or a negative transference towards them. In small children with a great deal of such apprehension the negative transference is often at once expressed as undisguised fear, whereas in older ones, especially those in the latency period, it more often takes the form of mistrust or reserve or simply dislike. In its struggle against its fear of the objects that are closest to it the child has a tendency to attach that fear to more distant objects (since displacement is one way of dealing with anxiety) and to see in them an embodiment of its 'bad' father or 'bad' mother. For this reason the really neurotic child, in whom the feeling of being under a constant threat of



danger predominates—the child who is always on the look-out for its ‘bad’ mother or father—will react to every stranger with anxiety.

We must never lose sight of the presence of this apprehension in small children and also, to some degree, in older ones. Even if they begin by exhibiting a positive attitude in analysis, we must be prepared to come upon a negative transference very soon—as soon, that is, as any complexive material makes its appearance. Immediately the analyst detects signs of that negative transference he should ensure the continuance of analytic work and establish the analytic situation by relating it to himself, at the same time referring it back, by means of interpretation, to its original objects and situations, and in this way resolve a certain quantity of anxiety. His interpretation should intervene at some point of urgency in the unconscious material and so open a way to the child’s unconscious mind. Where that point is will be shown by the multiplicity and frequent repetition, often in varied forms, of representations of the same ‘play thought’ (in Peter’s case, for instance, we had in his first analytical hour the alternating arrangement of vehicles, and the continual knocking together of the toy horses, carriages, engines, etc.) and also by the intensity of feeling attached to such representations, for this is a measure of the affect belonging to their content. If the analyst overlooks urgent material of this kind, the child will usually break off its game and exhibit strong resistance or even open anxiety and not infrequently show a desire to run away. Thus by making a timely interpretation—that is, by interpreting the material as soon as it permits of it—the analyst can cut short the child’s anxiety, or rather scale it down, in those cases too where the analysis has started with a positive transference. Where a negative transference is uppermost from the first, or where anxiety or resistances begin to appear at once, we have already seen the absolute necessity of giving interpretations as soon as possible.

It follows from what has been said that not only a timely interpretation but a deep-going one is essential. If we have an eye to the full urgency of the material presented, we find ourselves obliged to trace not only the representational content but also the anxiety and sense of guilt associated with it right down to that layer of the mind which is being activated. But if we model ourselves on the principles of adult analysis and proceed first of all to get into contact with the superficial strata of the mind—those which are nearest to the ego and to reality—we shall fail in our object of establishing the analytical situation and reducing anxiety in the child. Repeated experience has convinced me of this. The same is true of the mere translation of symbols, of interpretations which only deal with the *symbolic* representation of the material and do not concern themselves with the anxiety and sense of guilt that are associated with it. An interpretation which does not descend to those depths which are being activated by the material and the anxiety concerned, which does not, that is, attack the place where the strongest latent resistance is and endeavour in the first place to reduce anxiety where it is most violent and most in evidence, will have no effect whatever on the child, or will only serve to arouse stronger resistances in it without being able to resolve them again. But, as I have already tried to make clear in my extracts from Peter's analysis, in thus penetrating directly to those deep strata of the mind we shall not by any means completely resolve the anxiety contained there, nor in any way restrict the work still to be done in the upper strata, where the child's ego and relations to reality have to be analysed. This establishment of the child's relations to reality and this strengthening of its ego take place only very gradually and are a result, not a pre-condition, of analytic work.

So far we have been concerned in the main with discussing and illustrating the conduct of an early analysis of the average kind. I should now like to consider certain less usual



difficulties which I have met with and which have obliged me to adopt special technical methods. The case of Trude,<sup>1</sup> who exhibited so much anxiety at her very first coming, had already pointed to the fact that in such patients prompt interpretation was the only means of lessening anxiety and setting the analysis in motion. The case of Ruth,<sup>2</sup> aged four and a quarter, was still more instructive in this connection. She was one of those children whose ambivalence shows itself in an over-strong fixation upon the mother and certain other women on the one hand, and a violent dislike of another set of women, usually strangers, on the other. Already at a very early age, for instance, she had not been able to get used to a new nursemaid; nor could she make friends at all easily with other children. She not only suffered from a great deal of undisguised anxiety which often led to anxiety-attacks and from various other neurotic symptoms, but was of a very timid disposition in general. In her first analytic session she absolutely refused to be left alone with me. I therefore decided to get her elder sister<sup>3</sup> to sit in the room with her. My intention was to obtain a positive transference from her in the hope of being able eventually to work alone with her; but all my attempts, such as simply playing with her, encouraging her to talk, etc., were in vain. In playing with her toys she would turn only to her sister (although the latter effaced herself as much as possible) and would ignore me completely. The sister herself told me that my efforts were hopeless and that I had no chance of gaining the child's confidence even if I were to spend weeks on end with her instead of single hours. I therefore found myself forced to take other measures—measures which once more gave striking proof of the efficacy of

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Actually her stepsister. She was about twenty years Ruth's senior, and a very intelligent girl who had herself been analysed. I have had another case in which I was obliged to reconcile myself to having a third person present. In both cases the arrangement was carried out under exceptionally favourable circumstances; but I may say that, for a number of reasons, I should never recommend such a procedure except in the last resort.

interpretation in reducing the patient's anxiety and negative transference. One day while Ruth was once again devoting her attention exclusively to her sister, she drew a picture of a glass tumbler with some small round balls inside and a kind of lid on top. I asked her what the lid was for, but she would not answer me. On her sister repeating the question, she said it was 'to prevent the balls from rolling out'. Before this she had gone through her sister's bag and then shut it tightly 'so that nothing should fall out of it'. She had done the same with the purse inside the bag so as to keep the coins safely shut up. Furthermore, the material she was now bringing me had been quite clear even in her previous hours.<sup>1</sup> I now made a venture. I told Ruth that the balls in the tumbler, the bits of money in the purse and the contents of the bag all meant children in her Mummy's inside, and that she wanted to keep them safely shut up so as not to have any more brothers and sisters. The effect of my interpretation was astonishing. For the first time Ruth turned her attention to me and began to play in a different, less constrained, way.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it was still not possible for her to be alone with me, as she reacted to that situation with anxiety-attacks. Since I saw that analysis was steadily diminishing her negative transference in favour of a positive one, I decided to go on having her sister in the room. After three weeks the latter suddenly fell ill and I found myself faced with the alternative of stopping the analysis or risking an anxiety-attack. With her parents' consent I took the second course. The nurse handed the little girl over to me outside my room and went away in spite of her tears and screams. In this very painful situation I again began by trying to soothe the child in a non-analytical, motherly way, as any ordinary person would. I tried to comfort her and cheer

<sup>1</sup> In this analysis the child's desire to rob her mother's body, and her consequent feelings of anxiety and guilt, dominated the picture from the very beginning. The outbreak of her neurosis, moreover, had followed upon her mother's pregnancy and the birth of her younger sister.

<sup>2</sup> As has already been said, interpretation has the effect of changing the character of the child's play and enabling the representation of its material to become clearer.



her up and make her play with me, but in vain. She did just manage to follow me into my room, but once there I could do nothing with her. She went quite white and screamed and showed all the signs of a severe attack of anxiety. Meanwhile I sat down at the toy-table and began to play by myself,<sup>1</sup> all the while describing what I was doing to the terrified child, who was now sitting in a corner. Following a sudden inspiration, I took as the subject of my game the material which she herself had produced in the previous hour. At the end of it she had played round the wash-basin and had fed her dolls and given them huge jugfuls of milk, etc. I now did the same kind of thing. I put a doll to sleep and told Ruth I was going to give it something to eat and asked her what it should be. She interrupted her screams to answer 'milk', and I noticed that she made a movement towards her mouth with her two fingers (which she had a habit of sucking before going to sleep) but quickly took them away. I asked her whether she wanted to suck them and she said: 'Yes, but really and truly'. I understood that she wanted to reconstitute the situation as it happened at home every evening, so I laid her down on the sofa and, at her request, put a rug over her. Thereupon she began to suck her fingers. She was still very pale and her eyes were shut, but she was visibly calmer and had stopped crying. Meanwhile I went on playing with the dolls, repeating her game of the hour before. As I was putting a wet sponge beside one of them, as she had done, she burst out crying again and screamed, 'No, she mustn't have the *big* sponge, that's not for children, that's for grown-ups!' (I may remark that in her two previous sessions she had brought up a lot of material concerning her

<sup>1</sup> In especially difficult cases I use this technical device to get the analysis started. I have found that when children show their latent anxiety by being entirely inaccessible it often helps if I throw out a stimulus-word, as it were, by beginning to play myself. I apply this method within the narrowest possible limits. For instance, I may build some seats out of bricks and set some little figures near them. One child will call them a school and continue the game upon that basis; another will look upon them as a theatre and make the figures act accordingly, and so on.

envy of her mother.) I now interpreted this material in connection with her protest against the big sponge (which represented her father's penis). I showed her in every detail how she envied and hated her mother because the latter had incorporated her father's penis during coitus, and how she wanted to steal his penis and the children out of her mother's inside and kill her mother. I explained to her that this was why she was frightened and believed that she had killed her mother or would be deserted by her. I was careful all the while to begin by applying my interpretations to the doll—showing her as I played with it that it was afraid and screaming and telling her the reason—and then to carry them over from it to herself. In this way I established the analytical situation in its entirety. While I was doing this Ruth grew much quieter, opened her eyes and let me bring the table on which I was playing to the sofa and continue my game and my interpretations close beside her. Presently she sat up and watched my play with growing interest, and even began to take part in it herself. When the hour was over and the nurse came to fetch the child away, she was amazed to find her happy and cheerful and to see her say good-bye to me in a friendly and even affectionate way. At the beginning of her next hour, when her nurse again left her, she showed some anxiety it is true, but she did not have a regular anxiety-attack nor burst into tears. She immediately took refuge on the sofa and lay on it as she had done the day before, with her eyes shut and sucking her fingers. I was able to sit down beside her and continue my game of the previous hour straight away. The whole sequence of events of the day before was recapitulated, but in a shortened and mitigated form. And after a few sessions of this kind matters had progressed so far that the little girl only showed faint traces of an anxiety-attack at the beginning of her hour.

Analysis of Ruth's anxiety-attacks brought out the fact that they were a repetition of *pavor nocturnus*,<sup>1</sup> from which

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I.



she had suffered very severely at the age of two. At that time her mother had been pregnant, and the little girl's wish to steal the new baby out of her mother's body and to hurt and kill her herself had brought on a strong sense of guilt in the child, in consequence of which she had become too strongly fixated upon her mother. Saying good-night before she went to sleep meant saying good-bye for ever. For, as a result of her desires to rob and kill her mother, she was afraid of being abandoned by her for ever<sup>1</sup> or of never seeing her alive again, or of finding, in place of the kind and tender mother who was saying good-night to her, a 'bad' mother who would attack her in the night. These were the reasons, too, why she was afraid of being left by herself. Being left alone with me meant being abandoned by her 'good' mother; and her whole terror of the 'punishing' mother was now transferred to me. By analysing this situation and bringing it to light I succeeded, as we have seen, in dispelling her anxiety-attacks and in making it possible for normal analytic work to be begun.<sup>2</sup>

The technique which I employed in analysing Ruth's anxiety-attacks proved very effective in another case. During Trude's analysis<sup>3</sup> her mother fell ill and had to go to a nursing-home. This made an interval in her analysis which came just when the little girl's sadistic phantasies of attack

<sup>1</sup> In her paper, 'The Genesis of Agoraphobia' (1928), Helene Deutsch points out that fear of the mother's death, based upon various hostile wishes against her, is one of the commonest forms of infantile neurosis and is closely connected with a fear of being separated from her and with home-sickness.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth's treatment was not terminated, for her family had to return to their home abroad. Her neurosis, in consequence, was not completely removed. But in the 190 sessions she had I was able to effect the following improvements which, since I last heard of her, two years after the termination of her analysis, have been maintained: her anxiety was greatly lessened, and also, more particularly, the various forms of timidity from which she suffered. As a result of this she got on better with other children and with grown-up people and was able to adapt herself entirely to the requirements of her home and school life. Her fixation upon her mother was diminished and her attitude to her father improved. There was also a very decided change for the better in her relations to her brother and sisters. Her whole development, especially in respect of educability, social adaptation and capacity for sublimation, has since been a favourable one.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter I.

upon her mother dominated the picture. I have already described in what detail this child of three and three-quarters used to act out these scenes of aggression before me, and how, overcome by the anxiety which followed upon them, she used to hide herself with the cushions behind the sofa. But this never led to an actual anxiety-attack. When she came back after the interval caused by her mother's illness, however, she did have definite anxiety-attacks for several days in succession. The attacks only brought out her reaction to her aggressive impulses, *i.e.* the fear she felt on account of them. During these attacks Trude, like Ruth, would assume a particular position—the position she used to get into at night when she began to have anxiety. She would creep into a corner, tightly clasping to her the cushions which she often called her children, and would there suck her fingers and wet herself. Here again interpretation of her anxiety led to the cessation of her anxiety-attacks.<sup>1</sup>

My own subsequent experiences, as well as those of Miss M. N. Searl and other child analysts, have borne out the usefulness of these technical measures in other cases also. In the years of work which have elapsed since the treatment of these two cases it has become quite clear to me that the essential prerequisite for conducting an early analysis—and, indeed, a deep-going analysis of older children—is certainty in grasping the material presented. A correct and rapid estimation of the significance of that material, both as regards the light it throws on the structure of the case and its relation to the patient's affective state at the moment, and above all a quick perception of the latent anxiety

<sup>1</sup> Trude's neurosis showed itself in severe night-terrors, in anxiety during the daytime when she was left alone, in bed-wetting, general timidity, an over-strong fixation on her mother and dislike of her father, great jealousy of her brothers and sisters and in various difficulties in her upbringing. Her analysis, which comprised eighty-two hours, resulted in a cessation of bed-wetting and a great diminution of anxiety and timidity in various respects, and in a very favourable change in her relations to her parents and to her brothers and sisters. She had also suffered from colds which proved in analysis to be of psychological origin to a great extent, and these, too, decreased in frequency and strength. In spite of this improvement her neurosis was not yet fully resolved when, for external reasons, her analysis had to come to an end.



and sense of guilt it contains—these are the primary conditions for giving a right interpretation, *i.e.* an interpretation which will come at the right time and will penetrate to that level of the mind which is being activated by anxiety. The occurrence of anxiety-attacks in analysis can be reduced to a minimum if this technique is consistently adhered to. Should anxiety-attacks occur at the beginning of treatment, however—as may happen with neurotic children who are subject to such attacks in ordinary life—a faithful and systematic employment of this method will usually succeed in quickly reducing them to such proportions that it becomes possible to conduct a normal analysis of the young patient. The results obtained from analysing anxiety-attacks are also, I think, evidence of the general validity of some of the principles underlying play technique. It will be remembered that in Trude's case, although the material was accompanied by intense anxiety, I was able to analyse it to begin with without the occurrence of a regular anxiety-attack, because I could make continuous and deep-going interpretations in the first instance and could thus let the anxiety come out in small doses, as it were, and gradually diminish it. Trude's analysis had then to be interrupted at an unfavourable time and in difficult circumstances, as her mother fell ill and had to go away. When she came back to me her anxiety had accumulated to such an extent that she did have genuine anxiety-attacks. After a few analytic sessions, however, they entirely ceased and once more gave place to a piecemeal emergence of anxiety.

I should like to add a few remarks of a theoretic nature in connection with these anxiety-attacks. I have spoken of them as a repetition of *pavor nocturnus*; and I have referred to the position taken up by the patient during such attacks, or rather in the attempt to master them, and pointed out that it was a repetition of the child's anxiety-situation in bed at night. But I have also mentioned a specific early anxiety-situation which seemed to me to underlie both *pavor nocturnus* and anxiety-attacks. My observation of the

cases of Trude, Ruth and Rita, together with the knowledge I have gained in the last few years, have led me to recognize the existence of an anxiety, or anxiety-situation, which is specific for girls and the equivalent of the castration anxiety felt by boys. This anxiety-situation culminates in the girl's idea of having her body destroyed, its contents abolished, the children taken out of it, etc., by her mother. This subject will be treated more fully in the second part of this volume. I should merely like to draw the reader's attention here to certain points of agreement between the data I have been able to collect from my early analyses and one or two statements that Freud has meanwhile made in his book *Hemmung Symptom und Angst* (1926). In it he states that the counterpart in the small girl of the boy's castration fear is her fear of loss of love. The material I have brought forward from my analyses of small girls shows the existence of such a fear of being left alone or deserted by her mother very clearly. But that fear, I think, goes back still further. It is based upon the child's impulses of aggression against her mother and her desires, springing from the early stages of her Oedipus conflict, to kill her and steal from her. These impulses lead not only to anxiety or to a fear of being attacked by her mother, but to a fear that her mother will abandon her or die.

Let us now return to a consideration of technical questions. The *form* in which interpretation is given is another thing of great importance. It should be modelled on the concrete way in which children think and speak.<sup>1</sup> Peter, it

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905) Freud says: 'It is possible for a man to talk to girls and women upon sexual matters of every kind without doing them harm and without bringing suspicion upon himself, so long as, in the first place, he adopts a particular way of doing it, and, in the second place, can make them feel convinced that it is unavoidable. . . . The best way of speaking about such things is to be dry and direct; and that is at the same time the method furthest removed from the prurience with which the same subjects are handled in "society", . . . *J'appelle un chat un chat.*'—This attitude is, *mutatis mutandis*, the one I adopt in analysing children. I talk of sexual matters in the simple words best suited to their way of thought.

It must further be remembered that children are still for the most part under the dominion of the unconscious, whose language, as dreams and play show, is



will be remembered, pointed to the swing and said: 'Look how it dangles and bumps'. And so when I answered: 'That's how Daddy's and Mummy's thingummies bumped together', he took it in without the slightest difficulty. To take another instance: Rita (aged two and three-quarters) told me that the dolls had disturbed her in her sleep; they kept on saying to Hans, the underground train man (a male doll on wheels): 'Just go on driving your train along'. On another occasion she put a triangular brick on one side and said: 'That's a little woman'; she then took a 'little hammer', as she called another long-shaped brick, and hit the brick-box with it exactly in a place where it was only stuck together with paper, so that she made a hole in it. She said: 'When the hammer hit hard, the little woman was *so* frightened'. Running the underground train and hitting with the hammer stood for coitus between her parents, which she had witnessed till she was nearly two years old. My interpretation, 'Your Daddy hit hard like that inside your Mummy with his little hammer, and you were so frightened', fitted in exactly with her way of thinking and speaking.

In describing my methods of analysis I have often spoken of the small toys which are put at the children's disposal. I should like to explain briefly why these toys afford such valuable assistance in the technique of Play Analysis. Their smallness, their number and their great variety give the child a very wide range of representational play, while their very simplicity enables them to be put to the most varied uses. Thus toys like these are well suited for the expression of phantasies and experiences in all kinds of ways and in great detail. The child's various 'play thoughts', and the affects associated with them (which we partly infer from the subject-matter of its games, partly

concrete and pictorial. As we have occasion to see over and over again, children have a quite different attitude from adults to words. They assess them above all according to their imaginative qualities—to the pictures and phantasies they evoke. If we want to gain access to the child's unconscious in analysis (which, of course, we have to do via the ego and through speech), we shall only succeed if we avoid circumlocution and use plain words.

observe directly), are presented side by side and within a small space, so that we get a good oversight of the general connections and dynamics of the mental processes that are being put before us, and also, since spatial contiguity often stands for temporal contiguity, of the time-order of the child's various phantasies and experiences.

It may be thought from what has been said that all we have to do in order to analyse a child is to put toys in front of it, and that it will then immediately begin to play with them in an uninhibited and easy fashion. That is not at all what happens. Inhibition in play is, as I have repeatedly pointed out, very frequently met with to a greater or lesser degree in children and is an extremely common neurotic symptom. But it is precisely in such cases, where all other attempts to get into contact with the patient fail, that toys are so very useful as a means of starting analysis. It rarely happens that a child, however inhibited in its play, will not at least look at the toys or pick up one or other of them and do something with it. Even though it will soon stop playing—as Trude did—yet we shall have got some idea of its unconscious on which to base our analytic work from having noticed what sort of game it has started, at what point its resistance has set in, how it has behaved in connection with that resistance, what chance remark it may have dropped at the time, and so on. The reader has already seen how it is possible for analysis, with the help of interpretation, to make the child's play more and more free and its representational content increasingly rich and fruitful, and gradually to effect a reduction of its inhibition in play.

Toys are not the only requisites for a play analysis. There has to be a quantity of illustrative material in the room. The most important of these is a wash-basin with running water. This is usually not much used until a fairly late stage in the analysis, but it then becomes of great importance. A child will go through a whole phase of its analysis playing round the wash-basin (where are also provided a sponge, a glass tumbler, one or two small vessels, some spoons and paper). These games with water afford us



a deep insight into the fundamental pre-genital fixations of the child,<sup>1</sup> and are also a means of illustrating its sexual theories, giving us a knowledge of the relation between its sadistic phantasies and its reaction-formations and showing the direct connection between its pre-genital and genital impulses.<sup>2</sup>

In many analyses drawing or cutting out play a large part. In others—especially with girls—the child's time is mostly spent in making clothes and finery for itself, its dolls or its toy animals, or in decking itself with ribbons and other ornaments. Each child has within easy reach paper, coloured pencils, knives, scissors, needles and thread and bits of wood and string. Very frequently children bring their own toys with them. Nor does the mere enumeration of the actual articles at hand exhaust the possibilities. We gain a great deal of light from the various uses to which the child will put each one of them, or the way in which it will change from one game to another. All the ordinary furniture of the room as well, such as chairs, cushions, etc., are pressed into the service of its activities. In fact, the furniture of the child analyst's room has to be specially selected for this purpose. The phantasies and imaginative games which develop out of ordinary play with toys are of great significance. In its games of make-believe the child acts out in its own person what in another, usually an earlier, stage of its analysis it shows by means of its toys. In these games the analyst is usually assigned one or more rôles, and my practice is to get the child itself to describe those rôles to me in as great detail as possible.

Some children show a general preference for games of make-believe, others for the more indirect form of representation by means of playthings. Typical games of pretence are playing at mother and child, at being at school,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the case of Ruth (p. 53). It was in playing at the wash-basin that she brought out most fully her unsatisfied oral desires.

<sup>2</sup> These games with water have a very interesting counterpart in playing with fire. Very often a child will first play with water and then go and burn paper and matches in the fire, or *vice versa*. The connection between wetting and burning comes out clearly in such behaviour, as well as the great importance of urethral sadism. (See Chapter VIII.)

building or furnishing a house (with the help of chairs, pieces of furniture, cushions, etc.), going abroad, travelling in the train, going to the theatre, seeing the doctor, being in an office, keeping shop, etc. The value of such games of pretence from an analytic point of view lies in their direct method of representation, and consequently in the greater wealth of verbal associations they furnish. For, as has already been said in the first chapter, one of the necessary conditions of a successfully terminated treatment is that the child, however young, should make use of language in analysis to the full extent of its capacity.

No mere description, I feel, can do justice to the colour, life and complexity which fill the hours of play analysis, but I hope I have said enough to give the reader some idea of the accuracy and reliability of the results which we are able to attain by this means.



### CHAPTER III

## AN OBSESSIONAL NEUROSIS IN A SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL<sup>1</sup>

**I**N the last chapter we have dealt with the underlying principles of the technique of Early Analysis. In the present one we shall compare that technique with the technique of analysis in the latency period, using a case-history as an illustration. This case-history will also give us an opportunity of discussing certain questions of general and theoretical importance in the first place, and in the second of describing the methods used in the analysis of obsessional neurosis in children—a technique which, I may say, was evolved in the course of treating this unusually difficult and interesting case.

Erna, a child of six, had a number of severe symptoms. She suffered from sleeplessness, which was caused partly by anxiety (in particular by a fear of robbers and burglars) and partly by a series of obsessional activities. These consisted in lying on her face and banging her head on the pillow, in making a rocking movement, during which she sat or lay on her back, in obsessional thumb-sucking and in excessive masturbation. All these obsessional activities, which prevented her from sleeping at night, were carried on in the day-time as well. This was especially the case with masturbation, which she practised even in the presence of strangers, and, for instance, almost continuously at her kindergarten. She suffered from severe depres-

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on a paper read by me at Würzburg in October 1924, at the First Conference of German Psycho-Analysts.

sions, which she would describe by saying: 'There's something I don't like about life'. In her relations to her mother she was over-affectionate, but would at times veer round to a hostile attitude. She completely dominated her mother, left her no freedom of movement and plagued her continually with her love and hatred. As her mother put it: 'She swallows me up'. The child might, too, be fairly described as ineducable. Obsessive brooding and a curiously unchildlike nature were depicted in the suffering look upon the little girl's face. Besides this she made an impression of being unusually precocious sexually. A symptom which first became obvious during the analysis was that she had a very severe inhibition in learning. She was sent to school a few months after her analysis began, and it was soon evident that she was incapable of learning and could adapt herself neither to school nor to her school-fellows. The fact that she herself felt that she was ill—at the very beginning of her treatment she begged me to help her—was of great assistance to me in analysing her.

Erna began her play by taking a small carriage which stood on the little table among the other toys and pushing it towards me. She declared that she had come to fetch me. But she put a toy woman in the carriage instead and added a toy man. The two loved and kissed one another and drove up and down all the time. Next a toy man in another carriage collided with them, ran over them and killed them and then roasted and ate them up. Another time the fight had a different end and the attacking toy man was thrown down; but the woman helped him and comforted him. She got a divorce from her first husband and married the new one. This third person was given the most various parts to play in Erna's games. For instance, the original man and his wife were in a house which they were defending against a burglar; the third person was the burglar, and slipped in. The house burnt down, the man and woman burst and the third person was the only one left. Then again the third person was a brother who came on a visit; but while embracing the woman he bit her nose off. This little man, the



third person, was Erna herself. In a series of similar games she represented her wish to oust her father from his position with her mother. On the other hand, in many other games she showed her direct Oedipus wish to get rid of her mother and to win her father. Thus she made a toy teacher give the children violin lessons by knocking his head<sup>1</sup> against the violin, or stand on his head as he was reading out of a book. She then made him throw down book or violin as the case might be and dance with his girl pupil. The two next kissed and embraced each other. At this point Erna asked me all at once if I would allow a marriage between teacher and pupil. Another time a teacher and a mistress—represented by a toy man and woman—were giving the children lessons in manners, teaching them how to bow and curtsy, etc. At first the children were obedient and polite (just as Erna herself always did her best to be good and behave nicely), then suddenly they attacked the teacher and mistress, trampled them underfoot and killed and roasted them. They had now become devils, and gloated over the torments of their victims. But all at once the teacher and mistress were in heaven and the former devils had turned into angels, who, according to Erna's account, knew nothing about ever having been devils—indeed 'they never *were* devils'. God the Father, the former teacher, began kissing and embracing the woman passionately, the angels worshipped them and all was well again—though before long things were sure to go wrong again one way or another.

Erna used very often to play at being mother. I was the child, and one of my greatest faults was thumb-sucking. The first thing which I was supposed to put into my mouth was an engine. She had already much admired its gilded lamps, saying, 'They're so lovely, all red and burning', and at the same time putting them into her mouth and

<sup>1</sup> Compare her obsessional symptom of banging her head on the pillow. Here is another game which shows clearly that to Erna's unconscious the head had the meaning of a penis: a toy man wanted to get into a car and stuck his head into the window, whereupon the car said to him, 'Better come right inside!' The car stood for her mother inviting her father to have coitus with her.

sucking them. They stood to her for her mother's breast and her father's penis. These games were invariably followed by outbreaks of rage, envy and aggression against her mother, to be succeeded by remorse and by attempts to make amends and placate her. In playing with bricks, for instance, she would divide them between us so that she had more bricks than I; then she would make up for this by taking fewer herself, but would nevertheless always manage to keep more in the end. If I had to build with my bricks it was only so that she might prove how much more beautiful her building was than mine or so that she might knock mine down, apparently by accident. She would sometimes make a toy man be judge and decide that her house was better than mine. From the details of the game it was apparent that she was giving expression to a long-standing rivalry with her mother in this business about our respective houses. In a later part of her analysis she brought out her rivalry in a direct form.

Besides playing these games she also began cutting out paper and making paper patterns. She told me once that it was 'hash' she was making and that blood was coming out of the paper; upon which she gave a shudder and said she felt bad all at once. On one occasion she talked about 'eye-salad', and on another she said that she was cutting 'fringes' in my nose. She was here repeating the wish to bite off my nose which she had expressed in her very first hour. (And indeed she made a number of attempts to carry out her wish.) By this means she also showed her identity with the 'third person', the toy man who broke in and set fire to the house, etc., and who bit off noses. In her analysis, as in that of other children, cutting out paper proved to be very variously determined. It gave outlet to sadistic and cannibalistic impulses and represented the destruction of her parents' genitals or her mother's whole body. At the same time, however, it expressed her reactive impulses as well, because in the thing cut out—a pretty mat, let us say—what had been destroyed was re-created.

From cutting out paper Erna went on to playing with



water. A small piece of paper floating in the basin was a captain whose ship had gone down. He was able to save himself because—so Erna declared—he had something ‘long and golden’ which held him up in the water. She then tore off his head and announced: ‘His head’s gone; now he’s drowned’. These games with water led deep into the analysis of her oral-sadistic, urethral-sadistic and anal-sadistic phantasies. Thus, for instance, she played at being a washerwoman, and used some pieces of paper to represent a child’s dirty linen. I was the child and had to dirty my underclothes over and over again. (Incidentally, Erna brought her cophrophilic and cannibalistic impulses clearly to view by chewing up the pieces of paper, which represented excrements and children as well as dirty linen.) As a washerwoman Erna also had many opportunities of punishing and humiliating the child, and played the part of the cruel mother. But since she also identified herself with the child, she was gratifying her masochistic wishes as well. She would often pretend that the mother made the father punish the child and beat it on the bottom. This punishment was recommended by Erna, in her rôle of washerwoman, as a means of curing the child of its love of dirt. Once, instead of the father, a magician came along. He hit the child on the anus and then on the head with a stick, and as he did so a yellowish fluid poured out of the magic wand. On another occasion the child—a quite little one this time—was given a powder to take, which was ‘red and white’ mixed together. This treatment made it quite clean, and it was suddenly able to talk, and became as clever as its mother.<sup>1</sup> The magician stood for the penis, and hitting with the stick meant coitus. The fluid and the powder represented urine, faeces, semen and blood, all of which, according to Erna’s phantasies, her mother put inside herself in copulation through her mouth, anus and genitals.

Another time Erna suddenly changed herself from a

<sup>1</sup> These phantasies relate to the penis in its ‘good’ and curative aspect. In Chapters XI. and XII. we shall deal with this point more fully.

washerwoman into a fishwife and began to cry her wares. In the course of this game she turned on the water-tap (which she used also to call the 'whipped cream tap') after wrapping some paper round it. When the paper was soaked through and fell into the basin she tore it up and offered it for sale as fish. The compulsive greed with which Erna drank from the water-tap during this game and chewed up the imaginary fish pointed very clearly to the oral envy which she had felt during the primal scene and in her primal phantasies. This envy had affected the development of her character very deeply, and was also a central feature of her neurosis.<sup>1</sup> The equation of the fish with her father's penis, as well as with faeces and children, was very obvious in her associations. Erna had a variety of fish for sale and amongst them some '*Kokelfish*' or, as she suddenly called them, '*Kakelfish*'.<sup>2</sup> While she was cutting these up she had a sudden wish to defaecate, and this showed that the fish were equivalent to faeces, while cutting them up was equated with the act of defaecation. As the fishwife, Erna cheated me in all sorts of ways. She took large quantities of money from me and gave me no fish in return. I was helpless against her, because she was assisted by a policeman; and together they 'wurled'<sup>3</sup> the money, which also stood for fish, she had got from me. This policeman represented her father with whom she copulated and who was her ally against her mother. I had to look on while she 'wurled' the money, or fish, with the policeman, and then I had to try to get possession of it by stealth. In fact, I had to pretend to do what she herself had wanted to do to her mother when she had witnessed her mother and father having sexual intercourse. These sadistic impulses and phantasies were at the bottom of her severe anxiety in regard to her mother. She repeatedly expressed fear of a 'robber woman' who would 'take out everything inside her'.

<sup>1</sup> We shall discuss later on the connection between Erna's observations of her parents' sexual intercourse and her own neurosis.

<sup>2</sup> '*Kaki*' = 'faeces' in nursery German.

<sup>3</sup> An invented word resembling the German word for whipping cream.



The symbolic meaning of the theatre and performances of all kinds, as signifying coitus between the parents, came out very clearly in Erna's analysis.<sup>1</sup> The numerous performances in which she was an actress or a dancer, admired by all the spectators, showed the immense admiration—an admiration mixed with envy—which she had for her mother. Often, too, in identification with her mother, she pretended to be a queen before whom everyone bowed down. In all these representations it was always the child who got the worst of it. Everything which Erna did in the rôle of her mother—the tenderness she showed to her husband, the way in which she dressed herself up and allowed herself to be admired—had one chief purpose, which was to arouse the child's envy and to wound its feelings. Thus, for instance, when she, as queen, had celebrated her marriage with the king, she lay down on the sofa and wanted me, as the king, to lie down beside her. As I refused to do this I had to sit on a little chair by her side instead and hit the sofa with my fist. This she called 'churning', and it meant copulating. Immediately after this she announced that a child was creeping out of her, and she represented the scene in a quite realistic way, writhing about and groaning. Her imaginary child then shared its parents' bedroom and had to be a spectator of sexual intercourse between them. If it interrupted it was beaten, and the mother kept on complaining of it to the father. If she, as the mother, put the child to bed it was only in order to get rid of it and to be able to get back to the father all the sooner. The child was incessantly being maltreated and tormented. It was given gruel to eat that was so nasty as to make it sick, while at the same time its mother and father were enjoying marvellous foods made of whipped cream or a special milk prepared by Dr. Whippo or Whippour—a name compounded from 'whipping' and 'pouring out'. This special food, which was eaten only by the father and mother, was

<sup>1</sup> In my paper, 'Infant Analysis' (1923), I have considered in greater detail the universal symbolic significance of the theatre, performances, productions, etc., as representing intercourse between the parents. I may also refer to Rank, 'Das Schauspiel im Hamlet' (1919).

used in endless variations to represent the exchange of substances during coition. Erna's phantasies that in coition her mother incorporated her father's penis and semen and her father incorporated her mother's breasts and milk formed the basis of her hatred and envy against her two parents.

In one of Erna's games a 'performance' was given by a priest. He turned on the water-tap, and his partner, a woman dancer, drank from it. The child, called Cinderella, was only allowed to look on and had to remain absolutely motionless. A sudden tremendous outbreak of anger on Erna's part at this point showed with what feelings of hatred her phantasies were accompanied and how badly she had succeeded in dealing with those feelings. Her whole relationship to her mother had been distorted by them. Every educational measure, every act of nursery discipline, every unavoidable frustration, was felt by her as a purely sadistic act on the part of her mother, done with a view to humiliating and ill-treating her.

Nevertheless, in her make-believe of being a mother Erna did show affection to her imaginary child so long as it was still only a baby. Then she would nurse and wash it and be tender to it, and even forgive it when it was dirty. This was because, in her view, she herself had only been treated lovingly as long as she was an infant in arms. To her older 'child' she would be most cruel, and would let it be tortured by devils in a variety of ways and in the end be killed.<sup>1</sup> That the child was also the mother turned into a child, however, was made clear by the following phantasy. Erna played at being a child that had dirtied itself, and I, as the mother, had to scold her, whereupon

<sup>1</sup> Where, as in this case, the child's fury against its object is really excessive, the fundamental situation is that the super-ego has turned against the id. The ego escapes from this intolerable situation by means of a projection. It presents the object as an enemy in order that the id can destroy it in a sadistic way with the consent of the super-ego. If the ego can effect an alliance between the super-ego and the id by this means, it can for the time being send out the sadism of the super-ego that was directed against the id into the external world. In this way the primary sadistic impulses which are directed against the object are increased by the hatred originally directed against the id. (Cf. Chapter VIII. and also my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children', 1929.)



she became insolent, and out of defiance dirtied herself more and more. In order to annoy the mother still further she vomited up the bad food I had given her. The father was then called in by the mother, but he took the child's side. Next the mother was seized with an illness called 'God has spoken to her'; then the child in turn got an illness called 'mother's agitation' and died of it, and the mother was killed by the father as a punishment. The child then came to life again and was married to the father, who kept on praising it at the expense of the mother. The mother was then brought to life again too, but, as a punishment, was turned into a child by the father with the help of his magic wand; and now she in turn had to suffer all the scorn and ill-treatment to which the child had been subjected before. In her numerous phantasies of this kind about a mother and a child Erna was repeating what she felt her own experiences had been, while on the other hand she was also expressing the sadistic things she would like to do to her mother if the child-mother relationship were reversed.

Erna's mental life was dominated by anal-sadistic phantasies. At a later stage of her analysis, starting, once more, from games connected with water, she produced phantasies in which faeces 'baked on' to dirty clothes were cooked and eaten. Again, she played that she was sitting in the lavatory and eating what she produced there, or that we were handing it to one another to eat. Her phantasies about our continually dirtying each other with urine and faeces came out more and more clearly in the course of the analysis. In one game she demonstrated that her mother had dirtied herself over and over again and that everything in the room had been turned into faeces through her mother's fault. Her mother was accordingly thrown into prison and starved there. She herself then had the job of cleaning up after her mother, and in that connection called herself 'Mrs. Dirt Parade'—that is, a person parading with dirt. Through her love of tidiness she won the admiration and recognition of her father, who set her high above her mother

and married her. She did his cooking for him. The drinks and food which they gave one another were once more urine and faeces, but this time a good kind instead of a harmful one.—The above will serve as an example of the numerous and extravagant anal-sadistic phantasies which became conscious in the course of her analysis.

Erna, who was an only child, was much occupied in her imagination with the arrival of brothers and sisters. Her phantasies in this context deserve special attention, since, so far as my observations show, they have a general application. Judging from them and from those of other children similarly situated, it would appear that an only child suffers to a far greater extent than other children from the anxiety it feels in regard to the brother or sister whom it is forever expecting, and from the feelings of guilt it has towards them on account of its unconscious impulses of aggression against them in their imaginary existence inside its mother's body, because it has no opportunity of developing a positive relation to them in reality. This fact often makes it more difficult for an only child to adapt itself to society. For a long time Erna used to have attacks of rage and anxiety at the beginning and end of her analytic hour with me, and these were in part occasioned by her meeting the child who came to me for treatment immediately before or after her and who stood to her for the brother or sister whose arrival she was always awaiting.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, although she got on badly with other children, she felt a great need for their society at times. Her occasional wish for a brother or sister was, I found, determined by a number of motives. (1) The brothers and sisters which she desired meant a child of her own. This wish, however, was soon disturbed by severe feelings of guilt, because it would have meant that she had stolen the child from her mother. (2) Their existence would have reassured her that the attacks she had made in her phantasy on the children

<sup>1</sup> As Erna had no brothers or sisters in real life, her unconscious fear and jealousy of them which played such an important part in her mental life were only revealed and lived through in the analysis. This is once more an example of the importance of the transference-situation in child analyses.



which she supposed to be inside her mother had damaged neither them nor her mother, and that consequently the interior of her own body was unharmed. (3) They would afford her the sexual gratification which her father and mother had denied her; and, most important of all, (4) they would be her confederates, not only in sexual doings, but in enterprises against her terrifying parents. They and she together would kill her mother and capture her father's penis.<sup>1</sup>

But these phantasies of Erna's would quickly be followed by feelings of hatred against her imaginary brothers and sisters — for they were, ultimately, only substitutes for her father and mother—and by very severe feelings of guilt on account of the destructive acts she and they had committed against her parents in her phantasies. And she would usually end by having an attack of depression.

These phantasies, too, had their share in making it impossible for Erna to get on to good terms with other children. She shrank from them because she identified them with her imaginary brothers and sisters, so that on the one hand she regarded them as accomplices in her attacks upon her parents, and on the other she feared them as enemies because of her own aggressive impulses towards those brothers and sisters.

Erna's case throws light on another factor which seems to me to be of general importance. In the first chapter I drew attention to the peculiar relationship that children have to reality. I pointed out that failure in making a correct adaptation to reality could, in analysis, be recognized in the play of quite small children, and that it was necessary in analysis gradually to bring even the youngest child into complete touch with reality. With Erna, even after a good deal of analysis had been done, I had not succeeded

<sup>1</sup> In my paper, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928), I have pointed out that children, in their sexual relations with one another, especially if they are brothers and sisters, have phantasies of being in league together against their parents and often experience a diminution of their anxiety and sense of guilt from this belief. For a further discussion of this point see Chapter XII.

in obtaining any detailed information about her real life. I got plenty of material regarding her extravagant sadistic impulses against her mother, but I never heard the least complaint or criticism from her about her *real* mother and what she actually did. Although Erna got to recognize that her phantasies were directed against her own mother—a fact which she had denied at an earlier stage of analysis—and although it became clearer and clearer that she copied her mother in an exaggerated and invidious manner, yet it was difficult to establish the connection between her phantasies and reality. All my efforts to draw her actual life more fully into the analysis remained ineffective, until I had made definite progress in analysing her deepest reasons for wanting to cut herself off from reality. Erna's relationship to reality proved to be largely a façade, and this to a far greater extent than her behaviour would have led one to expect. The truth was that she was trying by every means to maintain a dream world in existence and to protect it from reality.<sup>1</sup> For instance, she used to imagine that the toy carriages and coachmen were in her service, that they came at her command and brought her everything she wished, that the toy women were her servants, and so on. Even while these phantasies were in progress she would often be seized with rage and depression. She would then go to the lavatory and there phantasy aloud while she defaecated. When she came out of the lavatory she would fling herself on to the sofa and begin to suck her thumb passionately, to masturbate and to pick her nose. I succeeded in getting her to tell me the phantasies which accompanied this defaecation, thumb-sucking, masturbation and nose-picking. By means of these physical satisfactions and the phantasies bound up with them she was endeavouring forcibly to continue the same day-dreaming situation which she had been keeping up in her game. The depression, anger and anxiety which seized her during her play were due to a disturbance of her phantasies by some incursion of reality.

<sup>1</sup> Many children make only an *apparent* return to reality when their games are interrupted. Actually they are still occupied with their phantasies.



She remembered, too, how greatly she was put out if anyone came near her bed in the morning while she was thumb-sucking or masturbating. The reason for this was not only that she was afraid of being caught, but that she wanted to ward off reality. A *pseudologia*, which appeared during her analysis and grew to fantastic proportions, served the purpose of re-shaping to her desires a reality which was intolerable to her. This extraordinary cutting-off of reality—to which end she also employed megalomaniac phantasies—had one cause, I found, in her excessive fear of her parents, especially her mother. It was in order to lessen this fear that Erna was driven to imagine herself as a powerful and harsh mistress over her mother, and this led to a great intensification of her sadism.

Erna's phantasies of being cruelly persecuted by her mother began to show their paranoid character more distinctly. As I have already said, she looked upon every step taken in her education and upbringing, even down to the least details of her clothing, as an act of persecution on the part of her mother. Not only so, but everything else that her mother did—the way she behaved towards her father, the things she did for her own amusement, and so on—were felt by Erna as a persecution of herself. Moreover, she felt herself continually spied upon. One cause of her excessive fixation upon her mother was the compulsion she was under of continually keeping watch over her. Analysis showed that Erna felt responsible for every illness that her mother had, and expected a corresponding punishment because of her own aggressive phantasies. The action of an over-severe and cruel super-ego in her was apparent in many of the details of her games and phantasies, as they perpetually alternated between the severe, punishing mother and the hating child. It needed a very deep-going analysis to elucidate these phantasies, which were identical with what, in adult paranoiacs, are known as delusions. The experience I have gained since I first wrote down this case-history has led me to the view that the peculiar character of Erna's anxiety, of her phantasies and of her rela-

tion to reality, is typical of those cases in which strong paranoic traits are active.<sup>1</sup>

At this point I must draw attention to Erna's homosexual tendencies, which had been excessively strong from early childhood onwards. After a great amount of her hatred of her father, arising out of the Oedipus situation, had been analysed, those tendencies, though undoubtedly diminished, were still very strong and seemed at first incapable of being resolved any further. It was only after obstinate and lengthy resistances had been broken down that the real character and full strength of her persecution phantasies and their relation to her homosexuality came to light. Anal love desires now emerged much clearer in their *positive* form, alternately with her phantasies of persecution. Erna once more played at being a shopwoman (and that what she sold was faeces was obvious from the fact that right at the beginning of the game she had to interrupt it in order to go and defaecate). I was a customer and had to prefer her to all other shopkeepers and think her wares particularly good. Then she was the customer and loved me, and in this way she represented an anal love relationship between her mother and herself. These anal phantasies were soon interrupted by fits of depression and hatred which she chiefly directed against me but which were actually aimed at her mother. In this connection Erna produced phantasies of a flea which was 'black and yellow mixed' and which she herself at once recognized as a bit of faeces—dangerous, poisoned faeces, it turned out. This flea, she said, came out of my anus and forced its way into hers and injured her.<sup>2</sup>

In Erna's case I was able to ascertain beyond doubt the

<sup>1</sup> Fuller consideration is given to this subject in the second part of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> In his 'Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924) Abraham says: 'Both van Ophuijsen' (in his paper 'On the Origin of the Feeling of Persecution', 1920) 'and Stürcke' (in his paper, 'The Reversal of the Libido-Sign in Delusions of Persecution', 1919) 'discovered during the course of their psycho-analytic practice that in paranoia the "persecutor" can be traced back to the patient's unconscious image of the faeces in his intestines which he identifies with the penis of the "persecutor", i.e. the person of his own sex whom he originally loved. Thus in paranoia the patient represents his persecutor by a part of his body, and believes that he is carrying it within himself. He would like to get rid of that foreign body but cannot.'



presence of phenomena familiar to us as underlying delusions of persecution, *i.e.* a transformation of love for the parent of the same sex into hatred, and an unusual prominence of the mechanism of projection. Further analysis, however, revealed the fact that beneath Erna's homosexual attitude, at an even deeper level, lay an extraordinarily intense feeling of hatred against her mother, derived from her early Oedipus situation and her oral sadism. This hatred had as its result an excessive anxiety which, in its turn, was a determining factor in every detail of her phantasies of persecution. We now came to a fresh lot of sadistic phantasies which in the intensity of their sadism exceeded anything which I had as yet come across in Erna's analysis. This was the most difficult part of the work and taxed Erna's willingness to co-operate in it to the utmost, since it was accompanied by extreme anxiety. Her oral envy of the genital and oral gratifications which she supposed her parents to be enjoying during intercourse proved to be the deepest foundation of her hatred. She gave expression to that hatred over and over again in countless phantasies directed against her parents united in copulation. In these phantasies she attacked them, and especially her mother, by means of her excrements, among other things; and what most deeply underlay her fear of my faeces (the flea), which she thought of as being pushed into her, were phantasies of herself destroying her mother's inside with her own dangerous and poisoned faeces.<sup>1</sup>

After these sadistic phantasies and impulses belonging to a very early stage of development had been further analysed, Erna's homosexual fixation upon her mother was lessened and her heterosexual impulses grew stronger.

<sup>1</sup> As I have later found in the course of my analytic work, the child's fears of poisoned and dangerous excrement increase its fixation at the pre-genital levels by being a constant incentive to it to convince itself that those excrements—both its own and those of its objects—are not dangerous but 'good' things (cf. Chapter VIII. of this volume). This is why Erna pretended that we were giving one another 'good' anal presents and loved one another. But the states of depression which followed upon these games of supposed love showed that at bottom she was terrified and believed that we—that is, her mother and she—were persecuting and poisoning each other.

Up till now the essential determinant of her phantasies had been her attitude of hatred and love towards her mother. Her father had figured chiefly as a mere instrument for coitus; he seemed to derive his whole importance from the mother-daughter relationship. In her imagination every sign of affection her mother showed her father, and indeed her whole relationship to him, had served no other purpose than to defraud her, Erna, make her jealous and set her father against her. In the same way, in those phantasies in which she deprived her mother of her father and married him, all the stress had been laid on her hatred of her mother and her wish to mortify her. If in games of this type Erna was affectionate to her husband, it would soon appear that the tenderness was only a pretence, designed to hurt her rival's feelings. At the same time as she made these important steps in her analysis she also moved forward in her relations to him and began to entertain genuine feelings for him of a positive nature. Now that the situation was not governed so completely by hate and fear, the direct Oedipus relationship could establish itself. At the same time Erna's fixation upon her mother was lessened and her relationship to her, which had hitherto been so ambivalent, was improved. This alteration in the girl's attitude to both her parents was based upon great changes in her phantasy-life. Her sadism was diminished, and her phantasies of persecution were far fewer in number and less in intensity. Important changes, too, occurred in her relationship to reality, and these made themselves felt, among other things, in an increased infiltration of reality into her phantasies.

In this period of her analysis, after having represented her ideas of persecution in play, Erna would often say with astonishment: 'But Mother can't *really* have meant to do that? She's very fond of me *really*.' But as her contact with reality became stronger and her unconscious hatred of her mother more conscious, she began to criticize her as a real person with ever greater openness. At the same time her relations with her improved, and hand



in hand with this improvement there appeared genuinely motherly and tender feelings in her attitude towards her imaginary child. On one occasion, after having been very cruel to it, she asked in a deeply moved voice: 'Should I *really* have treated my children like that?' Thus the analysis of her ideas of persecution and the diminution of her anxiety had succeeded not only in strengthening her heterosexual position but in improving her relations to her mother and in enabling her to have more maternal feelings herself. I should like to say here that in my opinion the satisfactory regulation of these fundamental attitudes, which determine the child's later choice of a love-object and the whole course of its future life, is one of the criteria of a successful child analysis.

Erna's neurosis had appeared very early in her life. Before she was quite a year old she showed marked signs of illness. (Mentally, she was an unusually precocious child, it may be remarked.) From that time on her difficulties increased continually, so that by the time she was between two and three years old her upbringing had become an insoluble problem, her character was already abnormal, and she was suffering from a definite obsessional neurosis. Yet it was not until she was about four years old that the unusual nature of her masturbatory habits and thumb-sucking was recognized. It will be seen, then, that this six-year-old child's obsessional neurosis was already a chronic one. Pictures of her at the age of about three show her with the same neurotic, worried look upon her face that she had when she was six.

I should like to impress upon the reader the unusual severity of the case. The obsessional symptoms, which amongst other things deprived the child almost entirely of sleep, the depressions and other signs of illness, and the abnormal development of her character, were only a weak reflection of the entirely abnormal, extravagant and uncurbed instinctual life which lay behind them. The future prospects of an obsessional neurosis which, like this one, had for years been of a progressive character could

not be described as other than decidedly gloomy. It may safely be asserted that the only remedy in a case of this kind was a timely treatment by psycho-analysis.

We shall now enter into the structure of the case in greater detail. Erna's training in habits of cleanliness had presented no difficulty and had been completed unusually early, by the time she was a year old. No severity had been necessary: the ambition of a precocious child had been a powerful incentive to the speedy attainment of the required standards of cleanliness.<sup>1</sup> But this outward success went along with a complete internal failure. Erna's tremendous anal-sadistic phantasies showed to what a degree she remained fixated at that stage and how much hatred and ambivalence flowed from it. One factor in this failure was a constitutionally strong anal-sadistic disposition; but an important part was played by another factor—one which has been pointed out by Freud<sup>2</sup> as having a share in the predisposition to obsessional neurosis, namely, a too rapid development of the ego in comparison with the libido. Besides this, analysis showed that another critical phase in Erna's development had been passed through with only apparent success. She had never got over her weaning. And there was yet a third privation which she underwent subsequently to this. When she was between six and nine months old her mother had noticed with what evident sexual pleasure she responded to the care of her body and especially to the cleansing of her genitals and of her anus. The over-excitability of her genital zone was unmistakable. Her mother therefore exercised greater discretion in washing those parts, and the older and the cleaner the child grew the easier, of course, it was to do so. But the child, who had looked upon the earlier and more elaborate attention as a form of seduction, felt this later reticence as a frustration. This feeling of being seduced, behind

<sup>1</sup> What some of the sources of Erna's early ambition in this line were can be inferred from the phantasies in which she outdid her mother in cleanliness and was called 'Mrs. Dirt Parade' by her father and married by him on account of it, while her mother had to starve in prison.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Predisposition to Obsessional Neurosis' (1913).



which there lay a desire to be seduced, was constantly being repeated all through her life. In every relationship, *e.g.* to her nurse and the other people who brought her up and also in her analysis, she tried to repeat the situation of being seduced or alternately to bring forward the charge that she was being seduced. By analysing this specific transference-situation it was possible to trace her attitude through earlier situations back to the earliest—to the experience of being cared for when she was an infant.

Thus in each of the three events that led to the production of Erna's neurosis we can discern the part played by constitutional factors.<sup>1</sup> It now remains to be seen in what way her experience of the primal scene when she was two and a half combined with those constitutional factors to bring about the full development of her obsessional neurosis. At the age of two and a half, and again at three and a half,<sup>2</sup> she had shared her parents' bedroom during a

<sup>1</sup> I have subsequently come to the view, which I shall more fully substantiate in Chapter VIII., that an excessive oral sadism brings on the development of the ego too rapidly and also hastens that of the libido. The constitutional factors in Erna's neurosis which have been referred to above, her over-strong sadism, the too rapid development of her ego and the premature activity of her genital impulses, are thus interconnected.

Since dealing with this case I have been able to discover yet another constitutional factor in the production of a neurosis. This consists in a relative incapacity on the part of the ego to tolerate anxiety. In many instances—and Erna was one of them—the child's sadism very early on arouses a degree of anxiety which the ego cannot adequately master. It must be said in general that the capacity of the ego to master even ordinary amounts of anxiety varies with the individual; and this fact is of aetiological importance in the neuroses.

<sup>2</sup> We have here an interesting analogy to the case described in Freud's 'History of an Infantile Neurosis' (1918). When Erna was five years old, that is, eighteen months after the last occasion on which she had watched her parents copulate, she was with them on a visit to her grandmother, and for a short time during the visit shared their bedroom, but without having an opportunity for observing coitus. Nevertheless, one morning Erna astonished her grandmother by saying: 'Daddy got into bed with Mummy and wiggle-woggled with her'. The child's story remained inexplicable until her analysis showed that she had taken in what she had seen when she was two and a half, and, though she had forgotten it, it had remained stored up in her mind. When she was three and a half these impressions had been revived, but once again forgotten. Finally, eighteen months later, a similar situation (sleeping in her parents' bedroom) had excited in her an unconscious expectation of seeing the same events and had stirred up her earlier experiences. In Erna's case, as in that of the Wolf Man, the primal scene had been completely repressed but had been subsequently re-activated and brought for a moment into consciousness.

summer holiday. At these times she had had an opportunity of watching coitus between them. Not only were the effects of this observable in her analysis, but they were definitely established by external evidence. In the summer during which she had made her first observations, a markedly unfavourable change had taken place in her. Analysis showed that the sight of her parents copulating had brought on her neurosis in its full force. It had enormously intensified her sense of frustration and envy in regard to her parents and had raised to an extreme pitch her sadistic phantasies and impulses against the sexual gratification they were obtaining.<sup>1</sup>

Erna's obsessional symptoms were explained as follows.<sup>2</sup> The obsessive character of her thumb-sucking was caused by phantasies of sucking, biting and devouring her father's penis and her mother's breasts. The penis represented the whole father and the breasts the whole mother.<sup>3</sup> As we have seen, moreover, the head stood for a penis in her unconscious. Her action of banging her head against the pillow was intended to represent her father's movements in coitus. She told me that at night she became afraid of robbers and burglars directly she stopped 'bumping' with her head. She was thus freeing herself from this fear by identifying herself with the object of it.

The structure of her obsessive masturbation was very

<sup>1</sup> In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 96, Freud has informed us that it is the quantity of anxiety present which determines the outbreak of a neurosis. In my opinion, anxiety is liberated by the destructive tendencies (cf. Chapters VIII. and XI. below), so that the outbreak of a neurosis would, in fact, be a consequence of an excessive increase of those destructive tendencies. In Erna's case it was her heightened hatred, bringing on anxiety, which led to her illness.

<sup>2</sup> Analysis also uncovered the strong melancholic features which her illness presented. In her analysis she used repeatedly to complain of a queer feeling that she often had. She would sometimes wonder, she said, whether she was an animal or not. This feeling proved to be determined by her sense of guilt over her cannibalistic impulses. Her depression, which she used to express in the words, 'There's something I don't like about life', was shown by the analysis to be a genuine *taedium vitae* and to be accompanied by suicidal ideas. It had its roots in the feelings of anxiety and guilt resulting from the oral-sadistic introjection of her love-objects.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924), Part II.



complicated. She distinguished between various forms of it: a pressing together of her legs which she called 'ranking'; a rocking movement, already mentioned, called 'sculpting'; and a pulling at the clitoris, called 'the cupboard game', in which she 'wanted to pull out something very long'. Further, she used to cause a pressure on her vagina by pulling the corner of a sheet between her legs. Various identifications were operative in these different forms of masturbation, according to whether, in the accompanying phantasies, she was playing the active part of her father or the passive one of her mother, or both at once. These masturbation phantasies of Erna's, which were very strongly sado-masochistic, showed a clear connection with the primal scene and with her primal phantasies. Her sadism was directed against her parents in the act of coition, and as a reaction to it she had phantasies of a correspondingly masochistic character.

During a whole succession of analytic hours Erna masturbated in these various ways. Owing to the well-established transference, however, it was also possible to induce her to describe her masturbation phantasies in between times. I was able in this way to discover the causes of her obsessive masturbation and thus to free her from it. The rocking movements which began in the second half of her first year sprang from her wish to be masturbated and went back to the manipulations connected with her toilet as an infant. There was a period of the analysis during which she depicted her parents copulating in the most various ways in her games and afterwards gave vent to her full fury over the frustration involved. In the course of these scenes she would never fail to produce a situation in which she rocked herself about in a half-lying or sitting posture, exhibited, and eventually even made open requests to me to touch her genitals or sometimes to smell them. At that time she once astonished her mother by asking her after her bath to lift up one of her legs and pat or touch her underneath, at the same time taking up the position of a child having its genitals powdered—a position which she had not been in

for years. The elucidation of her rocking movements led to the complete cessation of the symptom.

Erna's most resistant symptom was her inhibition in learning. It was so extensive that, notwithstanding all the trouble she gave herself, she took two years to master what children ordinarily learn in a few months. This difficulty was more decidedly affected by the later part of her analysis, and when I concluded the treatment it had been reduced, though not entirely done away with.

We have already gone into the favourable change which took place in Erna's relationship to her parents and in her libido position in general as a result of analysis, and have seen how it was only thanks to it that she was able to take the first steps in the direction of social adaptation. Her obsessional symptoms (obsessive masturbation, thumb-sucking, rocking, etc.) were removed, although their severity had been so great that they had been partly responsible for her sleeplessness. With their cure and the material lessening of anxiety, her sleep became normal. Her attacks of depression also passed away.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding these favourable results I did not consider that the analysis was by any means complete when it was broken off for external reasons after 575 hours of treatment, having extended over two and a half years. The extraordinary severity of the case, which was manifested not only in the child's symptoms but in her distorted character and completely abnormal personality, demanded further analysis in order to remove the difficulties from which she still suffered. That she was still in an insufficiently stable condition was shown by the fact that in situations of great strain she had a tendency to relapse into some of her old troubles, though such relapses were always less acute than the original condition. In these circumstances it was always possible that a severe strain, or even the onset of puberty, might bring about a fresh illness or some other trouble.

<sup>1</sup> When I last had news of her, two and a half years after the end of the analysis, these improvements had been maintained.



This opens up a question of first-rate importance, namely, the question of when a child analysis can be said to be completed. In children of the latency age I cannot consider even very good results, such as fully satisfy the people about them, as sufficient evidence that the analysis has been carried through to the end. I have come to the conclusion that the fact that an analysis has brought about a fairly favourable development in the latency period—however important that may be—is not in itself a guarantee that the patient's further development will be completely successful.<sup>1</sup> The transition to puberty, and from it to maturity, seems to me to be the test of whether a child analysis has been carried far enough or not. I shall go further into this question in Chapter VI., and I will only state here as an empirical fact that analysis ensures the future stability of the child in direct proportion as it is able to resolve anxiety in the deepest mental layers. In this, and in the character of the child's unconscious phantasies, or rather in the changes that have been brought about in them, a criterion is to be found which helps us to judge whether an analysis has been carried sufficiently far.

To return to Erna's case. As has already been said, at the end of the analysis, her phantasies of persecution were greatly reduced both in quantity and intensity. In my opinion, however, her sadism and anxiety could and should have been further diminished in order to prevent the possibility of an illness overtaking her at puberty or when she became grown-up. But since a continuance of the analysis was not at the time possible, its completion was left over for a future period.

I shall now proceed to discuss in connection with Erna's case-history certain questions of general importance, some of which, indeed, first arose out of her analysis. I found that the extensive occupation of her analysis with sexual

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter V., in connection with the analysis of Ilse, a child in the age of puberty, I shall consider in greater detail what are the factors that determine a successful transition to the latency period and what are the factors that determine a further successful transition to puberty.

questions and the freedom which was allowed her in her phantasies and games<sup>1</sup> led to a diminution and not to an increase of sexual excitation and preoccupation with sexual matters. Erna was a child whose unusual sexual precocity had struck everyone around her. Not only the type of phantasies she had but her behaviour and movements were those of a very sensual girl in her puberty. This was shown especially in her provocative behaviour towards men and boys. Her behaviour in this respect, too, was very much changed for the better during the analysis, and when it was ended she showed a more childlike nature in every way. Further, the result of analysing her masturbation phantasies was to put an end to her obsessive masturbation.<sup>2</sup>

Another analytic principle which I should like to emphasize here is that it is indispensable to make conscious as far as possible the doubts and criticism which the child harbours in its unconscious concerning its parents and especially their sexual life. Its attitude to its environment cannot but benefit from this, since, in being brought into consciousness, its unconscious grievances and adverse judgments undergo a test by reality and thus lose their former virulence, and its relations to reality improve. Again, its

<sup>1</sup> In the chapter before this I have pointed out that a child analysis, just as an adult one, must be carried through in abstinence; but as the child is different from the adult, a different criterion must be used. For instance, in taking part in the games and phantasies of the child the analyst gives it a much greater amount of gratification in reality than he does the adult patient; but this amount of gratification is seen to be less than it at first appears to be. For play is a form of expression natural to the child, so that the part the analyst takes in it does not differ in character from the attention with which he follows the verbal expressions of adult patients in describing their phantasies. Furthermore it must be remembered that the gratification which children obtain in their analysis is for the most part one of the imagination. Erna, it is true, did masturbate regularly in her analytic hour over a certain period of time. But she was an exception. We must not forget that in her case obsessional masturbation was present in such measure that she used to masturbate most of the day, sometimes even in the presence of other people. When her compulsion had been considerably lessened, the analytical situation led to a cessation of masturbation during the analytic hours in favour of a mere representation of the masturbation phantasies involved.

<sup>2</sup> I mean by this that her excessive masturbation and her masturbation done in the presence of other people, which had their roots in a compulsion, had stopped. I do not mean that she gave up masturbating altogether.



capacity to criticize its parents consciously is already, as we saw in Erna's case, a result of its improved relations to reality.<sup>1</sup>

Coming now to a special question of technique, it has been said more than once that Erna used often to have outbursts of anger during the analytic hour. Her fits of anger and her sadistic impulses would not seldom assume threatening forms towards me. It is a familiar fact that analysis releases strong affects in obsessional neurotics; and in children these find a much more direct and un-governed outlet than in adults. From the very beginning I made Erna clearly understand that she must not attack me physically. But she was at liberty to abreact her affects in many other ways; and she used to break her toys or cut them up, knock down the little chairs, fling the cushions about, stamp her feet on the sofa, upset water, smudge paper, dirty the toys or the washing basin, break out into abuse, and so on, without the slightest hindrance on my part.<sup>2</sup> But at the same time I used to analyse her rage, and this always lessened it and sometimes cleared it up altogether. There are thus three ways in which analytic technique deals with a child's outbreaks of emotion during treatment: (1) The child has to keep part of its affect under control, but it should only be required to do so in so far as there is a necessity for it in reality; (2) it may give vent to its affects in abuse and in the other ways mentioned above; and (3) its affects are lessened or cleared up by continuous interpretation and by tracing back the present situation to the original one.

<sup>1</sup> So long as Erna was so much cut off from reality I was only able to analyse material connected with her phantasies; but I was continually on the look-out for any threads, however weak, that might connect those phantasies with reality. In this way, and by constantly diminishing her anxiety, I was able gradually to strengthen her relation to reality. In the next chapter I shall try to show more clearly that in the latency period the analyst has very often to occupy himself for the most part with such phantasy material for long stretches of time before he can gain access to the child's real life and ego-interests.

<sup>2</sup> I regard it as an absolute necessity in child analysis that the room in which treatment is given shall be furnished in such a way that the child can abreact very freely. Damage to the furniture, floor, etc., must up to a certain limit be taken into the bargain.

The extent to which each of these methods is employed will, of course, greatly vary. For instance, with Erna I was early on driven to devise the following plan. At one period she used to have an outbreak of rage whenever I told her that the hour was at an end, and I used therefore to open both the double-doors of my room so as to check her, knowing that it would be extremely painful to her if the person who came to fetch her away saw anything of her outbursts. At this period, I may remark, my room used to look like a battlefield after Erna had left it. Later in the analysis she would content herself with hurriedly throwing down the cushions before she went out; while later still she used to leave the room perfectly calmly. Here is another example, taken from the analysis of Peter (aged three and three-quarters) who was also at one time subject to violent outbursts of rage. At a later period of his analysis he said quite spontaneously, pointing to a toy: 'I can just as easily *think* I've broken that'.<sup>1</sup>

I might here point out that the insistence which the analyst must inevitably lay upon the child's exerting a partial control over its emotions—a rule which, of course, the child will not by any means always be able to respect—is in no sense to be regarded as a pedagogic measure; such demands are founded upon necessities of the real situation such as even the smallest child can understand. In the same way there are occasions on which I do not actually carry out the whole of the actions which have been allotted to me in a game, on the ground that their complete realization would be too difficult or unpleasant for me. Nevertheless, even in such cases I follow out the child's

<sup>1</sup> The remarks of even quite small children prove that they have fully grasped the nature of the transference-situation and understand that the lessening of their affects is brought about by interpreting the original situation together with the affects belonging to it. In such cases, for instance, Peter used often to distinguish between myself, who 'was like his Mummy', and his 'real Mummy'. For instance, in running his motor up and down he spat at me and wanted to beat me, and called me a 'naughty beast'. He contradicted my interpretation violently, but by and by he became quiet and affectionate again and asked: 'When Daddy's thingummy went into Mummy like that, did I want to say "Beast" to my *real* Mummy?'



ideas as far as I possibly can. It is very important, too, that the analyst should show the least possible emotion in the face of the emotional outbursts of the child.

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I propose now to make use of the data obtained from this case to illustrate the theoretical views which I have since formed and which will be advanced in the second part of this volume.<sup>1</sup> The gilded lamps of the engine, which Erna thought were 'so lovely, all red and burning' and which she sucked, represented her father's penis (cf. also the 'something long and golden' which held the captain up in the water) and her mother's breasts as well. That she had an intense feeling of guilt about sucking at things was shown by the fact that when I was playing the part of the child she declared that my sucking these lamps was my greatest fault. This sense of guilt can be explained by the fact that sucking also represented biting off and devouring her mother's breasts and her father's penis. I may refer here to my view that it is the process of weaning which, together with the child's wish to incorporate its father's penis, and its feelings of envy and hatred towards its mother, sets the Oedipus conflict in motion. At the base of this envy lies the child's early sexual theory that in copulating with the father the mother incorporates and retains his penis.<sup>2</sup>

This envy proved to be the central point of Erna's neurosis. The attacks which she made at the beginning of her analysis as the 'third person' on the house which was occupied only by a man and a woman turned out to be a portrayal of her destructive impulses against her mother's body and her father's penis imagined to be inside it. These impulses, stimulated by the little girl's oral envy, found expression in her game in which she sank the ship (her mother) and tore away from the captain (her father) the 'long, golden thing' and his head that kept him afloat, *i.e.*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also my paper, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.

castrated him as he was copulating with her mother. The details of her phantasies of assault show to what heights of sadistic ingenuity these attacks upon her mother's body went. She would, for instance, transform her excrements into combustible and explosive substances so as to wreck it from within. This was depicted by the burning down and destruction of the house and the 'bursting' of the people inside it. The cutting-out of paper (making 'hash' and 'eye-salad') represented a complete destruction of the parents in the act of coition. Erna's wish to bite off my nose and to make 'fringes' in it was not only an attack directed against myself but symbolized an assault upon the incorporated penis of her father, as was proved by the material she produced in connection with it.<sup>1</sup>

That Erna made her attacks on her mother's body with an eye to seizing and destroying not only her father's penis but also the faeces and children there is shown by the variety of fish round which there revolved that desperate struggle, in which every resource was employed, between the 'fishwife' (her mother) and me as the child (herself). She furthermore imagined, as we saw, that I, after looking on while she and the policeman 'wurled' money, or fish, together, tried to gain possession of the fish at all costs. The sight of her parents in sexual intercourse had induced a desire to steal her father's penis and whatever else might be inside her mother's body. It will be remembered that Erna's reaction against this intention of robbing and completely destroying her mother's body was expressed in the fear she had, after her struggles with the fishwife, that a robber woman would take out everything inside her. It is this fear that I have described in Chapter XI. as belonging to the earliest danger-situation of the girl-child<sup>2</sup> and as being equivalent to the castration anxiety of boys. I may here mention the con-

<sup>1</sup> In other analyses, too, I have found that attacks upon my nose, feet, head, etc., never referred simply to those parts of my body as such; they were also directed against them as symbolic representations of the father's penis, attached to, or incorporated by me, that is, the mother.

<sup>2</sup> See also my 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).



nection between this early anxiety-situation of Erna's and her extraordinary inhibition in learning, a connection which I have since met with in other analyses.<sup>1</sup> I have already pointed out that in Erna it was only the analysis of the deepest layers of her sadism and of her earliest Oedipus situation that brought about any change in that inhibition. Her strongly developed epistemophilic instinct was so closely linked up with her intense sadism that the defence against the latter led to a complete inhibition of a number of activities which were based upon her desire for knowledge. Arithmetic and writing represented violent sadistic attacks upon her mother's body and her father's penis to her unconscious.<sup>2</sup> They meant tearing, cutting up or burning her mother's body, together with the children it contained, and castrating her father. Reading, too, in consequence of the symbolical equation of her mother's body with books, had come to mean a violent removal of substances, children, etc., from the inside of her mother.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, I shall make use of this case to bring up yet another point to which, as a result of further experience, I have come to ascribe general validity. Not only was the character of Erna's phantasies and of her relations to reality typical for cases in which paranoid traits are strongly operative, but the underlying causes of those paranoid traits in her and of the homosexuality associated with them were, I have found, fundamental factors in the aetiology of paranoia in general. In the second part of this book (Chapter IX.) this question will receive further discussion. I will only point out briefly in this place that I have discovered strong paranoid features in a number of analyses of children, and have thus been led to the conviction that one important and promising task of Child Analysis is to uncover and clear up psychotic traits in the early life of the individual.

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*, where the connection between the subject's inhibition in work and his sadistic identification with his mother is discussed.

<sup>2</sup> On this point see also my paper, 'The Rôle of the School in the Libidinal Development of the Child' (1923).

<sup>3</sup> In his paper, 'Some Unconscious Factors in Reading' (1930), James Strachey has pointed out this unconscious significance of reading.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TECHNIQUE OF ANALYSIS IN THE LATENCY PERIOD

**C**HILDREN in the latency period present special difficulties of their own in analysis. Unlike the small child, whose lively imagination and acute anxiety enable us to gain an easier insight into its unconscious and make contact there, they have a very limited imaginative life, in accordance with the strong tendency to repression which is characteristic of their age; while, in comparison with the grown-up person, their ego is still undeveloped, and they neither understand that they are ill nor want to be cured, so that they have no incentive to start analysis and no encouragement to go on with it. Added to this is the general attitude of reserve and distrust so typical of this period of life—an attitude which is in part an outcome of their intense preoccupation with the struggle against masturbation and thus makes them deeply averse to anything that savours of sexual enquiry or touches on the impulses they are keeping under with so much difficulty.

Patients of this age neither play like small children nor give verbal associations like adults. Thus the analyst finds no clear way of access to them. Nevertheless I have found it possible to establish the analytic situation without delay by making contact with their unconscious, as I do in the case of small children, but from an angle of approach which is suited to their older minds. The small child is still under the immediate and powerful influence of its instinctual experiences and phantasies and puts them in front



of us straight away, so that in the very first hours of analysis we can interpret its representations of coitus and its sadistic phantasies; whereas the latency-period child has already desexualized those experiences and phantasies much more completely and given them quite another form.

The following two cases will illustrate this point. The seven-year-old Grete was a very reserved and mentally restricted child. She had marked schizoid traits and was quite inaccessible. She drew pictures, however, and produced primitive representations of houses and trees which she drew over and over again in an obsessional way, first the one, then the other. From certain continually recurring changes in the colour and size of the houses and trees and from the order in which they were drawn I was able to infer that the houses represented herself and her mother and the trees her father and brother, and that she was interested in their relations to one another. At this point I began to interpret and told her that what she was concerned with was the sex difference between her father and mother and between herself and her brother and also the difference between grown-ups and children. She agreed with me and showed the immediate impression that the interpretation had made on her by making alterations in her drawings, which had hitherto been quite monotonous. (Nevertheless, I may remark that for some months analysis was still chiefly carried on with the help of her drawings.) In the case of Inge, aged seven, I was unable for several hours to find any means of approach. I kept up a conversation about her school and kindred subjects with some difficulty, and her attitude towards me was very mistrustful and reserved. She showed a little more interest as she began telling me about a poem which she had read at school. She thought it remarkable that long words should have alternated in it with short ones. A little while earlier she had spoken about some birds that she had seen fly into a garden but not out again. These observations had followed upon a remark she let fall to the effect that she and her girl friend had done quite as well at some game as the

boys. I explained to her that she was occupied by a wish to know where children (the birds) really came from and also to understand better the sex difference between boys and girls (long and short words—the comparative skill of boys and girls). My interpretation had the same effect on Inge as it had had on Grete. Contact was established, the material she brought became richer and the analysis was set going.

In these and other cases we see repressed curiosity dominating the picture. If in our latency-period analyses we choose this point for making our first interpretations—by which, of course, I do not mean explanations in the intellectual sense, but only interpretations of the material as it emerges in the form of doubts and fears or unconscious knowledge or sexual theories<sup>1</sup> and so on—we soon come up against feelings of guilt and anxiety in the child and have thus established the analytic situation.

The effect of interpretation, which depends on having removed a certain amount of repression, shows itself in several ways. (1) The analytical situation is established. (2) The child's imagination becomes freer. Its means of

<sup>1</sup> Sexual interest serves in this way as a means of approach to the repressed material. As a result of my interpretations Inge and Grete, for example, asked for no further sexual enlightenment but brought up material which opened the way to their anxiety and sense of guilt. This effect was brought about by the removal of a piece of repression. Inge, it is true, was partly conscious of her interest in the origin of children, but not of her broodings over sex differences nor of her anxiety on the subject. Grete had repressed both. The effect my interpretations had on both children was due to the fact that I demonstrated their interest to them by means of the material they gave me and so established a connection between their sexual curiosity, latent anxiety and sense of guilt.

Purely intellectual explanations not only usually fail to answer the questions that are uppermost in the child's mind but stir up repressed material without setting it free. When this happens the child reacts with aversion to the explanation. In my paper, 'The Child's Resistance to Analysis' (1921), I put forward the view that children can only accept sexual enlightenment in so far as their own anxiety and internal conflicts do not prevent them, and that therefore their resistance to such enlightenment should be regarded as a symptom. Since then this view seems to have been generally accepted (cf. 'Über Sexuelle Aufklärung', *Sonderheft der Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik*, 1927; and Fenichel, 'Some Infantile Theories not Hitherto Described', 1927). Whenever an intellectual explanation does give relief it has usually succeeded in resolving some piece of repression in the top levels of the mind. Frank explanations in answer to *spontaneous* questions on this subject are received by the child as a proof of confidence and love and help to alleviate his sense of guilt by bringing sexual questions into open discussion.



representation grow in richness and extent; its speech becomes more abundant and the stories it tells more full of phantasy. (3) The child not only experiences relief but gets a certain understanding of the purpose of analytic work, and this is analogous to the adult's insight into his illness.<sup>1</sup> In this way interpretations lead gradually to the overcoming of the difficulties, mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, which stand in the way of the starting and carrying out of an analysis during the latency period.

During the latency period, in consonance with the more intense repression of its imagination and with its more developed ego, the child's games are more adapted to reality and less imaginative than those of the small child. In its games with water, for instance, we do not find such direct representations of oral wishes or of wetting and dirtying as in smaller children; its occupations subserve the reactive tendencies in a greater measure and take on rationalized forms like cooking, cleaning and so on. This great importance of the rational element in the play of children at this age is due, I think, not only to a more intense repression of their imagination, but to an obsessional over-emphasis of reality which is part and parcel of the special developmental conditions of the latency period.

In dealing with typical cases of this period we see again and again how the child's ego, which is still much weaker than that of the adult, endeavours to strengthen its position by placing all its energies in the service of the repressive tendencies and by holding fast to reality. Our analytic work runs counter to all the child's ego-tendencies, and that is why we should not, I think, expect assistance from its ego at the beginning, but should try to establish relations with its unconscious systems first and from thence gradually gain the co-operation of the ego as well.

In contrast to small children, who are usually more inclined to play with toys at the beginning of their analysis, children in the latency period very soon start acting parts. With children of five to ten years of age I have played games

<sup>1</sup> As I pointed out in Chapter II., this is equally true of very small children.

of this sort which have been continued from one hour to another over periods of weeks and months, and one game has only given place to another when all its details and connections have been explained by analysis. The game which is then next started commonly displays the same complexive phantasies in another form and with new details which lead to deeper connections. The seven-year-old Inge,<sup>1</sup> for instance, could be described as a normal child on the whole, in spite of certain troubles whose full extent was only revealed by analysis. For a considerable time she played an office game with me, in which she was the manager who gave orders of every sort and dictated letters and wrote them, in contrast to her own severe inhibitions in learning and writing. In this her desires to be a man were clearly recognizable. One day she gave up this game and began to play at school with me. (It is to be noted that she not only found her lessons difficult and unpleasant but had a great dislike for school itself.) She now played at school with me for quite a long time. She was the mistress and I the pupil, and the kind of mistakes she made me make threw a great deal of light upon the sources of her own failure at school. It turned out that, as a youngest child, she had, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, found the superiority of her elder brothers and sisters very hard to put up with, and when she went to school she had

<sup>1</sup> Inge's analysis, which occupied 375 hours in all, was in the nature of a prophylactic treatment. Her main trouble was an inhibition in regard to school, which did not seem very marked when she first came to me but which, in the course of her analysis, was discovered to be very deep-seated. Inge was a lively and active child, with a good adaptation to society and in no respect abnormal. Nevertheless, her analysis effected some remarkable changes in her. It turned out that her liveliness was founded on an active homosexual attitude and her generally good relations to boys on an identification with them. Moreover, analysis first disclosed the severity of the depressions she was liable to, and it showed that behind her apparent self-confidence there was a severe sense of inferiority and a fear of failure which were responsible for her difficulties in regard to school life. After her analysis she had a much freer, happier and more open nature, her relations to her mother were more affectionate and frank and her sublimations increased in number and stability. A change in her sexual attitude, as a result of which her feminine components and maternal tendencies were able to come to the fore to a much greater extent, augured well for her future life. In the seven years that have elapsed since the end of her treatment, she has developed very satisfactorily and has successfully entered the age of puberty.



felt that the old situation was being reproduced. The ultimate reason why she could not endure that superiority and why she could not bear being taught at school later on was, as the details of the lessons she gave as mistress showed, because her own desire for knowledge had been unfulfilled and repressed at a very early age.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen how Inge first made an extensive identification with her father (as shown by the game in which she was the manager) and then with her mother (as shown by the game in which she was the mistress and I the pupil). In her next game she was a toy-shop woman and I had to buy all sorts of things from her for my children, such as fountain-pens, pencils, etc., so as to make them clever and quick. The things were all penis-symbols and showed what it was that she had wanted her mother to give her. The wish-fulfilment in this game, in which the little girl's homosexual attitude and castration complex were once more uppermost, was to the effect that her mother should give her her father's penis so that with its help she might supplant her father and win her mother's love. In the further course of the game, however, she preferred to sell me as her customer things to eat for my children, and it became evident that her father's penis and her mother's breast were the objects of her deepest oral desires and that it was her oral frustrations that were at the bottom of her troubles in general and her difficulty in regard to learning in particular.

Owing to the feelings of guilt bound up with the oral-sadistic introjection of her mother's breast, Inge had at a very early stage looked upon her oral frustration as a punishment.<sup>2</sup> Her impulses of aggression against her mother,

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter IX. the view is put forward in general that the first and most fundamental beginnings of the epistemophilic instinct appear at a very early stage of development, before the child is able to speak. To the best of my knowledge these early questionings (which in all probability remain entirely or partly unconscious) set in at the same time as the earliest sexual theories and the increase of sadism, towards the middle of the first year of life. They belong, that is, to the period which in my view ushers in the Oedipus conflict.

<sup>2</sup> According to Ernest Jones the child always regards deprivations as deliberately imposed on it by the persons about it (cf. his 'Early Development of Female Sexuality', 1927; also Joan Riviere's contribution to 'A Symposium on Child-Analysis', 1928).

which arose out of the Oedipus situation, and her wish to rob her of her children had strengthened these early feelings of guilt and led to a very deep though concealed fear of her mother. This was why she was unable to maintain the feminine position and tried to identify herself with her father. But she was also unable to accept the homosexual position, on account of an excessive fear of her father, whose penis she wanted to steal. To this was added her feeling of inability to *do* in consequence of her inability to *know* (*i.e.* the early frustration of her epistemophilic instinct) to which her position as youngest child had contributed. She therefore failed at school in the activities that answered to her masculine components; nor, since she could not maintain the feminine position, which involved the conception and bearing of children in phantasy, was she able to develop feminine sublimations derived from that position. Owing to her anxiety and feelings of guilt, moreover, she also failed in the relation of child to mother (*e.g.* in her relation to the school-mistress), since she unconsciously equated the absorption of knowledge with the gratification of oral-sadistic desires, and this involved the destruction of her mother's breast and her father's penis.

While Inge was a failure in reality, in imagination she played every rôle. Thus in the game I have described, in which she played the part of office-manager, she represented her successes in the rôle of father; as the school-mistress she had numerous children, and at the same time exchanged her rôle of the youngest child for that of the oldest and cleverest; while in the game of being a seller of toys and food she was not only in the superior position but made up for the oral frustrations she had suffered as a baby.

I have brought this case forward to show how, in order to discover the underlying psychological connections, we have to investigate not only all the details of a given game but the reason why one game is changed for another. I have often found that such a change of game allows us an insight into the causes of changes from one psycho-



logical position to another or of fluctuations between such positions, and hence into the dynamics of the interplay of mental forces.

The next case gives an opportunity of demonstrating the application of a mixed technique. Kenneth, aged nine and a half, a very infantile boy for his age, was sent to me for analysis on account of various difficulties. He was fearful, shy and seriously inhibited, and he suffered from severe anxiety. From an early age he had suffered to a marked degree from morbid brooding. He was a complete failure at his lessons, his knowledge of school subjects being that of a child of about seven. At home he was of an exceedingly aggressive, insolent and intractable disposition. His unsublimated and apparently uninhibited interest in all sexual matters was quite out of the ordinary; he used obscene words by preference and exhibited himself and masturbated in an unusually shameless manner for a child of his age.<sup>1</sup>

The boy's previous history had been briefly as follows. At a very early age he had been seduced by his nurse. His memory of it was quite conscious, and the circumstance had later become known to his mother. According to her, the nurse, Mary, had been very devoted to the child but had been very strict in her insistence upon his cleanliness. Kenneth's memories of being seduced went back to the beginning of his fifth year, but it is certain that it actually took place very much earlier. He reported, apparently with pleasure and without inhibition, that his nurse used to take him with her when she went to have her bath and used to ask him to rub her genitals. Besides this, he had nothing but good to tell of her; he asserted that she had loved him and for a long time denied that she had treated him severely. At the beginning of his analysis he reported a dream which

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth's treatment occupied 225 hours and could not be carried any further owing to external circumstances. His neurosis, though not actually removed, had by then been materially reduced. As far as his practical life was concerned, the partial results obtained led to the diminution of a number of difficulties: among other things he was able to comply better with the requirements of his school life and of his upbringing in general.

he had dreamt repeatedly since his fifth year: *he was touching an unknown woman's genitals and masturbating her.*

His fear of me cropped up in the first hour. He had an anxiety-dream shortly after the beginning of his analysis in which *all of a sudden a man was sitting in my chair instead of me. I then undressed, and he was horrified to see that I had an unusually large male genital organ.* In connection with the interpretation of this dream a quantity of material came up in regard to his sexual theory of 'the mother with a penis', a mental image which, as analysis proved, was very definitely embodied for him in Mary. He had evidently been very much afraid of her when he was a small child, for she had beaten him very severely, but he was still unable to admit this fact until a later dream made him alter his attitude.

Infantile as Kenneth was in many respects, he very soon acquired a clear understanding of the aim and the necessity of his analysis. He used sometimes to give associations in the manner of older children and chose of his own accord to lie on the sofa while he did so. The greater part of his analysis, indeed, was carried on in this way. Soon, however, he began to supplement his verbal material with action. He picked up some pencils from the table and made them represent people. Another time he brought some paper-clips with him and these in turn became people and fought with one another. He also made them represent projectiles and constructed buildings out of them. All this took place on the sofa on which he lay. Finally he discovered a box of bricks on the window-sill, brought the little play-table up to the sofa and accompanied his associations with representations by means of the bricks.

Of Kenneth's second dream, which carried the analysis a long step further, I will now relate as much as is necessary for illustrating the technique employed. *He was in the bathroom and was urinating; a man came in and fired off a bullet which hit his ear and knocked it off.* While he was telling me this dream Kenneth carried out various operations with



the bricks which he explained to me in the following way. He himself, his father, his brother and the nurse Mary were each represented by a brick. All these people were lying asleep in different rooms (the walls of which were also indicated by bricks). Mary got up, took a big stick (another brick) and came towards him. She was going to do something to him because he had been misbehaving himself in some way. (It turned out that he had masturbated and wetted himself.) While she was beating him with the stick he began to masturbate her and she at once stopped beating him. When she began to beat him again he again masturbated her and she stopped; and this process was repeated again and again till at last, in spite of everything, she threatened to kill him with the stick. His brother then came to his rescue.

Kenneth was exceedingly surprised when he recognized at last from this game and its associations that he really had been afraid of Mary. At the same time, however, part of his fear of both parents had also become conscious. His associations showed clearly that behind his fear of Mary lurked the fear of a wicked mother in league with a castrating father. The latter was represented in his dream by the man who shot his ear off in the bathroom—the very place in which he had often masturbated his nurse.

Kenneth's fear of his two parents united against him and perpetually copulating with each other proved to be extremely important in his analysis. It was only after I had made many subsequent observations of the same kind in other cases<sup>1</sup> that I realized the fact that fear of 'the woman with a penis' is founded upon a sexual theory, formed at a very early stage of development, to the effect that the mother incorporates the father's penis in the act of coitus,<sup>2</sup> so that in the last resort the woman with a penis

<sup>1</sup> For a further discussion of this view see my paper, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928), also Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> In his 'Homosexualität und Ödipuskomplex' (1926) Felix Boehm has pointed out that the idea of the concealed female penis receives its pathogenic value by having been brought into connection, in the unconscious, with the idea of the father's dreaded penis hidden inside the mother.

signifies the two parents joined together. I will illustrate this from the material under discussion here. In his dream Kenneth was first attacked by a man, but afterwards, in his play, it was Mary, armed with a stick, who attacked him. She represented, as his associations showed, not only the 'woman with a penis', but his mother united with his father. In this figure his father, who had before appeared as a man, was represented by his penis alone, *i.e.* by the stick with which Mary struck him.

I may here point out a similarity between the technique of early analysis and the play technique which is employed in certain cases with older children. Kenneth had become conscious of an important part of his early history by means of playing with bricks. As his analysis proceeded he used often to get a return of anxiety and could then only communicate his associations to me if he supplemented them by representations with the bricks. (Indeed, it not seldom happened that, when this anxiety came on, words quite failed him and all he could do was to play.) After his anxiety had been lessened by interpretations he was able to speak more freely again.

Another example of modification in technique is provided by the method I adopted with Werner, a nine-year-old obsessional neurotic. This boy, who behaved in many respects like an adult obsessional and in whom morbid brooding was a marked symptom, also suffered from severe anxiety which was, however, chiefly exhibited in great irritability and in fits of rage.<sup>1</sup> A great part of this

<sup>1</sup> Werner's case presented the following symptoms: anxiety and timidity, which showed themselves in various forms but especially in anxiety at school and in great and increasing difficulties in his lessons; obsessional ceremonials that were constantly becoming more elaborate and took up hours at a time; and a severely neurotic character which made his upbringing extremely difficult. His analysis, which comprised 210 hours of treatment, removed these difficulties to a great extent. The boy's general development at the present time (five years after the end of the treatment) is very favourable. The obsessional ceremonials have ceased, he is good at his work, enjoys going to school, gets on with his associates both at home and at school and is well adjusted socially. His relations both with his immediate and his remoter environment are good. Above all, however—and this was not the case before—he takes pleasure in the most varied sorts of activities and sport and feels well.



analysis was carried on by means of toys and with the help of drawing. I was obliged to sit beside him at the play-table and to play with him to a greater extent than I usually have to with even quite small children. Sometimes I had even to carry out the actions involved in the game by myself under his direction. For instance, I had to build up the bricks, move the carts about and so on, while he merely supervised my actions. The reason he gave for this was that his hands sometimes trembled very much, so that he could not put the toys in their places or might upset them or spoil their arrangement. This trembling was a sign of the onset of an anxiety-attack. I could in most cases cut the attack short by carrying out the game as he wanted it, at the same time interpreting, in connection with his anxiety, the meaning of my actions. It appeared that his fear of his own aggressiveness and his disbelief in his capacity to love had made him lose all hope of restoring the parents and brothers and sisters whom, in his imagination, he had attacked and injured. Hence his fear that he might accidentally knock down the bricks and things which had already been put up. This distrust of his own constructive tendencies and of his ability to make good what he had destroyed was one of the causes of his severe inhibition in work and play.

After his anxiety had been resolved to a large extent, Werner played his games without assistance from me. He did a great many drawings and gave abundant associations to them. In the last part of his analysis he produced his material chiefly in the form of free associations. Lying on the sofa—a position in which he, like Kenneth, preferred to give his associations—he would narrate continuous phantasies of adventure in which apparatus, mechanical contrivances and so on played a large part. In these stories the material that had before been represented in his drawings appeared again, but enriched in many particulars.

Werner's intense and acute anxiety was mainly expressed, as I have said, in the form of fits of rage and aggressiveness and in an overbearing, defiant and fault-

finding attitude. He had no insight into the fact that he was ill and used to insist that there was no reason why he should be analysed; and for a long period, whenever his resistances came up, he used to behave to me in an insolent and angry way. At home, too, he was a difficult child to manage, and his people would hardly have been able to induce him to go on with his treatment if I had not very soon succeeded by analysis in resolving his anxiety bit by bit until his expression of his resistance to analysis was almost entirely confined to the analytic hour.

We now come to a case which presented technical difficulties of a quite unusual kind. The nine-and-a-half-year-old Egon displayed no very definite symptoms, but his condition as a whole made a disquieting impression. He was completely 'shut-in' even with regard to those nearest to him, spoke only when it was absolutely necessary, had almost no ties of feeling, no friends and nothing that interested or pleased him. He was, it is true, a good scholar, but, as the analysis showed, only on an obsessional basis. When asked whether he would like anything or not, his stereotyped answer would always be 'I don't mind'. The unchild-like, strained expression of his face and the stiffness of his movements were most striking. His withdrawal from reality went so far that he did not see what was going on around him and failed to recognize familiar friends when he met them. Analysis revealed the presence of strong and steadily increasing psychotic features which would in all probability have led to the onset of schizophrenia at the age of puberty.

Here is a short summary of the boy's previous history. When he was about four years old he had been repeatedly threatened by his father for masturbating and told that he must at any rate always confess when he did it. These threats had been followed by marked changes in his character. He began to tell lies and to have frequent outbursts of rage. Later his aggressiveness receded into the background and instead his whole attitude became more and more one of unemotional and passive defiance and of withdrawal from the external world.



I began by getting Egon to lie on the sofa (which he did not mind doing and apparently preferred to playing games) and for several weeks tried in various ordinary ways to set the treatment going, till I was forced to recognize that my attempts along these lines were doomed to failure. It became clear to me that the child's difficulty in speaking was so deeply rooted that my first task must be to overcome it analytically. Noticing that the scanty material I had so far been able to get from him had mostly been inferred from the way in which he played with his fingers while he let fall an occasional word—not amounting to more than a few sentences in an hour—I understood that he was under the necessity of helping himself out by action and I accordingly asked him once more whether, after all, he was not interested in my little toys. He gave his usual reply, 'I don't mind'. Nevertheless, he looked at the things on the play-table and proceeded to occupy himself with the little carts, and with them alone. There now developed a monotonous game which occupied his whole hour for weeks on end. Egon made the carts run along the table and then threw them on to the ground in my direction; I gathered by a look from him that I was to pick them up and push them back to him. In order to get away from the rôle of the prying father, against whom his defiance was directed, I played with him for weeks in silence and made no interpretations, simply trying to establish *rappport* by playing with him. During all this time the details of the game remained absolutely the same, but, monotonous as it was (and incidentally extremely exhausting for me), there were many small points to be noted in it. It appeared that in his case, as in all analyses of boys, making a cart move along meant masturbation and coitus, making carts hit together meant coitus, and comparison of a larger cart with a smaller meant rivalry with his father or his father's penis.

When, after some weeks, I explained this material to Egon in connection with what was already known<sup>1</sup> it

<sup>1</sup> Further analysis showed that it had been quite pointless to withhold interpretation of the material for so long. I have never yet in any analysis seen any

had a far-reaching effect in two directions. At home his parents were struck by the very much greater freedom of his behaviour; and in analysis he showed what I have found to be the typical reaction to the resolving effect of interpretation. He began to add new details to his monotonous game—details which, though at first only discernible to close observation, grew more and more marked as time went on and finally brought about a complete alteration of the game. From merely pushing carts along, Egon went on to a building game, as with increasing skill he began to pile the carts one upon another to a very great height and to compete with me over it. He now proceeded for the first time to use the bricks, and it soon became evident that the things he built up were, however skilfully the fact was concealed, always human beings—or genitals—of both sexes. From building Egon went on to a quite remarkable form of drawing. Without looking at the paper he would roll a pencil about between his two hands and in this way produce lines. Out of these scrawls he then himself deciphered shapes, and these always represented heads, among which he himself clearly distinguished the male from the female. In the details of these heads and their relations to one another the material that had occurred in the earlier games soon reappeared—namely, his uncertainty about the difference between the sexes and about coitus between his parents, the questions that were connected in his mind with these subjects, the phantasies in which he as a third party played a part in the sexual intercourse of his parents, etc. But his hatred and his destructive impulses, too, became obvious in the cutting out and cutting to bits of these heads which also represented the children in his mother's body and his parents themselves. It was only now that we arrived at the full meaning of his having piled up the carts as high as he

advantage follow from such a policy of non-interpretation. In most cases in which I have tried the plan I have very soon had to abandon it because acute anxiety has developed and there has been a risk of the analysis being broken off. In Egon's case, where the anxiety was under such powerful restraint, it was possible to continue the experiment longer.



could. It represented his mother's pregnant body for which he had envied her and whose contents he wished to steal from her. He had strong feelings of rivalry with his mother and his wish to rob her of his father's penis and of her children had led to an acute fear of her. These representations were afterwards supplemented by the cutting out he did, in which he gradually acquired considerable skill. Just as in his building activities, the shapes which he cut out represented only human beings. The way in which he brought these shapes into contact with one another, their different sizes, whether they represented men or women, whether they had some parts missing or too many, when and how he began to cut them to pieces—all these matters took us deep into both his inverted and his direct Oedipus complex. His rivalry with his mother, based on his strong passive homosexual attitude, and the anxiety he felt concerning it, both in regard to his father and his mother, became more and more evident. His hatred of his brother and sisters and the destructive impulses he had had towards them when his mother was pregnant found expression in the cutting out of forms which he recognized as representing small and incomplete human beings. Here, too, the order in which he played his games was important. After cutting out and cutting to pieces he would start building as an act of restoration; and similarly, the figures he had cut up he proceeded to over-decorate, urged by reactive tendencies, and so on. In all these representations, however, there always reappeared the repressed questions and the repressed early intense curiosity which proved to be an important factor in his inability to speak, his 'shut-in' character and his lack of interests.

Egon's inhibition in play dated back to the age of four and in part to an even earlier time. He had made buildings before he was three and had begun cutting out paper rather later, but had only kept it up for quite a short time and even at that time had only cut out heads. He had never drawn at all, and after the age of four he had taken

no pleasure in any of these earlier pursuits. What appeared now, therefore, were sublimations rescued from profound repression, partly in the form of revivals and partly as new creations; and the childlike and quite primitive manner in which he set about each of these pursuits belonged really to the level of a three- or four-year-old child. It may be added that simultaneously with these changes the boy's whole character took a turn for the better.

Nevertheless, his inhibition in speech was for a long time only slightly relieved. It is true that he gradually began to answer the questions which I put to him during his games in a freer and fuller way, but on the other hand I was for a long time unable to get him to give free associations of the kind that are usual in older children. It was not until much later and during the last part of the treatment, which occupied 425 hours in all, that we fully recognized and explored the paranoid factors underlying his inhibition in speech, which was then completely removed.<sup>1</sup> As his anxiety substantially diminished he began of his own accord to give me single associations in writing. Later on he used to whisper them to me and make me answer him in a low voice. It became ever clearer that he was afraid of being overheard by someone in the room, and there were some parts of the room which he would not go near on any account. If, for instance, his ball had rolled under the sofa or the cupboard or into a dark corner, I used to have to fetch it back for him; while, as his anxiety increased, he would once more assume the same rigid posture and fixed expression which had been so marked in him at the beginning of his analysis. It came out that he suspected the presence of hidden persecutors watching him from all these places and even from the ceiling, and that his ideas of persecution went back, in the last resort, to his fear of the many penises inside his mother's body and his own. This paranoic fear of the penis as a persecutor had been very greatly increased by his father's attitude in watching him and cross-questioning him in regard to masturbation and

<sup>1</sup> I intend to go more fully into this case in Chapter IX.



had made him turn away from his mother as well, as being in league with his father (the 'woman with a penis'). As his belief in a 'good' mother became stronger in the course of analysis, he came to treat me more and more as an ally and as a protector from persecutors who were threatening him from every quarter. It was not until his anxiety in this respect and his estimation of the number and dangerousness of his persecutors had lessened that he was able to speak and move more freely.<sup>1</sup>

The last part of Egon's treatment was conducted almost exclusively on the lines of free associations. There is no doubt in my mind that I only succeeded in treating and curing this boy by being able to gain access to his unconscious with the assistance of the play technique used for small children. Whether it would have been still possible to do this at a later age seems to me doubtful.<sup>2</sup>

Though it is true that in general we make great use of verbal associations in dealing with children in the latency period, yet in many cases we can only do so in a manner that differs from that employed with adults. With children like Kenneth, for example, who soon consciously recognized the help given him by psycho-analysis and realized his need for it, or even with the much younger Erna, whose wish to be cured was very strong, it was possible from the very beginning occasionally to ask: 'Well? What are you thinking of now?' But with many children of under nine or ten it would be useless to put such a question. The way in which a child is to be questioned must be discovered in connection with its games or its associations.

<sup>1</sup> Melitta Schmideberg has discussed a similar case in her paper, 'A Contribution to the Psychology of Persecutory Ideas and Delusions' (1931). The patient was a boy of about sixteen who scarcely spoke at all in his analysis. Here again the inhibition in speech was caused by ideas of persecution, and the boy did not begin to associate at all freely until analysis had lessened his paranoid anxiety.

<sup>2</sup> In general, too, the result of Egon's analysis was completely satisfactory. The setness of his face and movements passed off. He began to take pleasure in the games, pastimes and interests common to boys of his age. His relations with his family and the world became good and he grew happy and contented. When last I heard from him, three and a half years after his analysis was finished, this healthy development had continued and had not been disturbed by certain severe strains to which he had been subjected in the meanwhile.

If we watch the play of a quite small child we shall soon observe that the bricks, the pieces of paper and, indeed, all the things around it stand in its imagination for something else. If we ask it 'What is that?' while it is occupied with these articles (it is true that as a rule before we do this a certain amount of analysis must have been done and a transference established) we shall find out quite a lot. We shall often be told, for instance, that the stones in the water are children who want to come on shore or that they are people fighting one another. The question 'What is that?' will lead on naturally to the further question 'Well, what are they doing?' or 'Where are they now?' and so on. We have to elicit the associations of older children in a similar, though modified, fashion; but this, as a rule, can only be effected when the repression of imagination and the mistrust, which are so much stronger in them, have been diminished by a certain amount of analysis and the analytic situation has been established.

To go back to the analysis of the seven-year-old Inge. When she was playing the part of office-manager, writing letters, distributing work and so on, I once asked her: 'What is there in this letter?' and she promptly replied: 'You'll find that out when you get it'. When I received it, however, I found that it contained nothing but scribbles.<sup>1</sup> So shortly afterwards I said: 'Mr. X——' (who also figured in the game) 'has told me to ask you what there is in the letter, as he must know, and would be glad if you would read it all out to him over the telephone'. Whereupon she told me, without making any difficulty, the whole imaginary contents of the letter and at the same time gave a number of illuminating associations. Another time, I had to pretend to be a doctor. When I asked her what was

<sup>1</sup> Inge, who, as I have already mentioned, suffered from a severe inhibition in writing, had a burning wish to write 'quickly and beautifully' like grown-ups. The compromise between this wish and her inhibition was scribbling, which represented in her phantasy beautiful and skilful handwriting. Her wish if possible to excel the grown-ups in writing and her very strong ambition and curiosity, existing as they did side by side with a deep feeling that she knew nothing and could do nothing, played a great part in her failure in real life.



supposed to be the matter with her, she answered: 'Oh, that makes no difference'. I then began to have a proper consultation with her like a doctor, and said: 'Now, Mrs. —, you really must tell me exactly where you feel the pain'. From this there arose further questions—why she had fallen ill, when the illness had begun, etc. Presented with them in this form, she willingly answered my questions, and since she played the part of patient several times in succession I obtained abundant and deeply buried material in this way. And when the situation was reversed and she was the doctor and I the patient, the medical advice she gave me supplied me with further information.

From what has been said in this chapter, then, we see that in dealing with children of the latency period it is essential above all to establish contact with their unconscious phantasies, and that this is done by interpreting the symbolic content of their material in relation to their anxiety and feelings of guilt. But since the repression of imagination in this stage of development is much more severe than in earlier stages, we often have to find access to the unconscious through representations which are to all appearances entirely devoid of phantasy. We must also, in typical analyses of the latency period, be prepared to find that it is only possible to resolve the child's repressions and set free its imagination step by step and with much labour. In some cases for weeks or even months at a time nothing that is produced seems to contain any psychological material whatever. All we get, for instance, are reports out of newspapers or accounts of the contents of books or monotonous stories about school. Moreover, such activities as monotonous obsessive drawing, building, sewing or making things—especially when we obtain few associations to them—seem to offer no means of approach to the life of the imagination. But we need only recall the examples of Greta and Egon to remind ourselves that even activities and talk so completely without phantasy as these do open the way to the unconscious if we do not merely regard them as

expressions of resistance but treat them as true material. By paying enough attention to small indications and by taking as our starting-point for interpretation the connection between the symbolism, sense of guilt and anxiety that accompany those representations, we shall always find opportunities for beginning and carrying on the work of analysis.

But the fact that in child analysis we get into communication with the unconscious before we have established any very extensive relation with the ego does not mean that we have excluded the ego from participating in the analytic work. Any exclusion of this kind would be impossible, considering that the ego is so closely connected with the id and the super-ego and that we can only find access to the unconscious through it. Nevertheless, analysis does not apply itself to the ego as such (as educational methods do) but only seeks to open up a path to the unconscious systems of the mind—those systems which are decisive for the formation of the ego.

To return to our examples once more. As we have seen, the analysis of Greta (aged seven) was almost entirely carried on by means of her drawings. She used, it will be remembered, to draw houses and trees of various sizes alternately in an obsessive way. Now, starting from these unimaginate and obsessional pictures, I might have tried to stimulate her phantasy and link it up with other activities of her ego in the way in which a sympathetic teacher might do. I could have got her to want to decorate and beautify her houses or to put them and the trees together and to make a street out of them and thus have connected her activities with whatever aesthetic or topographical interests she might chance to possess. Or I could have gone on from her trees to make her interested in the difference between one kind of tree and another and perhaps in this way have stimulated her curiosity about nature in general. Had any attempt of this kind succeeded, we should expect her ego-interests to come more to the fore and the analyst to get into closer contact with her ego. But experi-



ence has shown that in many cases such a stimulation of the child's imagination fails in its attempts to effect a loosening of the repression and thus to find a foothold for the beginning of analytic work.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, such a procedure is very often not feasible, because the child suffers from so much latent anxiety that we are obliged to establish the analytic situation as quickly as possible and begin actual analytical work at once. And even where there is a chance of gaining access to the unconscious by making the ego our starting-point, we shall find that the results are small in comparison with the length of time taken to obtain them. For the increase in the wealth and significance of the material thus gained is only a seeming one; in reality we shall not be doing more than meeting the same unconscious material clothed in more striking forms. In Greta's case, for instance, we might have been able to stimulate her curiosity and thus, in favourable circumstances, have led her to become interested, say, in the entrances and exits of houses and in the differences between trees and the way they grew. But these expanded interests would only be a less disguised version of the material she had been showing us in the monotonous drawings quite at the beginning of her analysis. The big and small trees and the big and small houses which she kept on drawing in a compulsive manner represented her mother and father and herself and her brother, as was indicated by the difference in the sizes, shapes and colours of her drawings and by the order in which they were done. What underlay them was her repressed curiosity about the difference between the sexes and other allied problems; and by interpreting them in that sense I was able to get at her anxiety and sense of guilt and to set the analysis going.

Now if the material which underlies noticeable and complicated representations is no different from that which underlies meagre ones, it is irrelevant from the point of view of analysis which of the two kinds of representation is chosen as the point of departure for interpretation. For

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the analysis of Egon and Greta.

in child analysis it is interpretation alone, in my experience, which starts the analytic process and keeps it going. Therefore, so long as the analyst has been able to understand what kind of material is being put forward and to establish its connection with the latent anxiety, he is in a position to give a correct interpretation of the most monotonous and unpromising representations of it, while step by step as he resolves anxiety and removes repressions the child's ego-interests and sublimations will begin to make headway. In this way, for instance, Ilse—whose case will be considered in greater detail in the following chapter—gradually evolved out of her unvarying and obsessive drawing a decided gift for handicraft and design, without my having urged upon her or in any way suggested such an activity.

Before leaving the subject of analyses of the latency period, however, there still remains one problem to discuss. It is not, strictly speaking, of a technical nature but it is of importance in the work of the child analyst. I refer to the analyst's dealings with the parents of his patients. In order for him to be able to do his work there must be a certain relation of confidence between himself and the child's parents. The child is dependent on them and so they are included in the field of the analysis; yet it is not they who are being analysed and they can therefore only be influenced by ordinary psychological means. The relationship of the parents to their child's analyst entails difficulties of a peculiar kind, since it touches closely upon their own complexes. Their child's neurosis weighs very heavily upon the parents' sense of guilt, and at the same time as they turn to analysis for help they regard the necessity of it as a proof of their responsibility for their child's illness. It is, moreover, very trying for them to have the details of their family life revealed to the analyst. To this must be added, particularly in the case of the mother, jealousy of the confidential relation which is established between the child and its analyst. This jealousy, which is to a very large extent based upon the subject's rivalry with her own



mother-*imago*,<sup>1</sup> is also very noticeable in governesses and nurses, who are often anything but friendly in their attitude towards analysis. These, and other factors, which remain for the most part unconscious, give rise to a more or less ambivalent attitude in the parents, especially the mother, towards the analyst, and this is not removed by the fact of their having conscious insight into their child's need for analytic treatment. Hence, even if the child's relatives are consciously well disposed to its analysis, we must expect that they will to some extent be a disturbing element in it. The degree of difficulty they will cause will of course depend on their *unconscious* attitude and on the amount of ambivalence they have. This is why I have met with no less hindrance where the parents were familiar with analysis than where they knew practically nothing about it. For the same reason, too, I consider any far-reaching theoretical explanations to the parents before the beginning of an analysis as not only unnecessary but out of place, since such explanations are liable to have an unfavourable effect upon their own complexes. I content myself with making a few general statements about the meaning and effect of analysis, mention the fact that, in the course of it, the child will be given information upon sexual subjects and prepare the parents for the possibility of other difficulties arising from time to time during the treatment. In every case I refuse absolutely to report any details of the analysis to them. The child who gives me its confidence has no less claim to my discretion than the adult.

What we should aim at in establishing relations with the parents is, in my judgment, in the first place to get them to assist in our work principally in a passive way, by refraining as much as possible from all interference, such as encouraging the child, through questions, to talk about

<sup>1</sup> In certain cases in which I have analysed a mother and child simultaneously it has emerged that in the mother's unconscious there was a fear of being robbed of her children. The child's analyst represented to her a stern mother who was demanding the restitution of the children she had stolen away and was at the same time discovering and punishing the aggressive impulses she had once entertained against her brothers and sisters.

its analysis at home or lending any kind of support to whatever resistances it may give utterance to. But we do need their more active co-operation on those occasions when the child is overtaken by really acute anxiety and violent resistances. In such situations—I may here recall the cases of Ruth and Trude<sup>1</sup>—it devolves upon those in charge of the child to find ways and means of getting it to come in spite of its difficulties. As far as my experience goes, this has always been possible; for in general, even when resistance is strong there is a positive transference to the analyst as well, so that the child's attitude to its analysis is ambivalent. The help given us by the child's parents must, however, never be allowed to become a permanent adjunct to analytic work. Periods of such intense resistance should only occur rarely and not last long. The work of analysis must either prevent it, or, if that cannot be done, rapidly resolve it.

If we can succeed in establishing a good relation with the child's parents and in being sure of their unconscious co-operation, we are in a position to obtain useful knowledge about the child's behaviour outside analysis, such as any changes, appearances or disappearances of its symptoms that may occur in connection with the analytic work. But if information on these points is only to be got from parents at the price of raising difficulties of another kind, then I prefer to do without it, since, although valuable, it is not absolutely indispensable. I always impress upon the parents the necessity of not giving the child occasion to believe that any steps they may take in its upbringing are due to my advice and of keeping education and analysis completely separated. In this way the analysis remains, as it should, a purely personal matter between myself and my patient.

With children no less than with adults I regard it as essential that analysis should be carried on in the analyst's place of work and that a definite hour should be kept to. As a further means of avoiding displacement of the ana-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II.



lytic situation, I have found it necessary not to let the person who brings the child to analysis wait in my house. She brings the child and takes it away again at the appointed time.

Unless the mistakes that are being made are too gross, I avoid interfering with the way in which the child is being brought up, for errors in this field usually depend so largely upon the parents' own complexes that advice generally proves not only useless but calculated to increase their anxiety and sense of guilt; and this will only put further obstacles in the path of the analysis and have an unfavourable effect on the parents' attitude towards their child.<sup>1</sup>

The whole situation improves greatly after an analysis is finished or when it is far advanced. The removal or lessening of a child's neurosis has a good effect upon its parents. As the mother's difficulties in dealing with her child diminish, her sense of guilt diminishes too, and this improves her attitude towards the child. She becomes more accessible to the analyst's advice in regard to the child's upbringing and—this is the important point—has less *internal*

<sup>1</sup> I will take as an illustration the instance of a mother who was well acquainted with analysis and who had great faith in it as a result of the satisfactory progress that was being made by her ten-year-old daughter, then under treatment for a severe neurosis. In spite of this I found it difficult to dissuade her from supervising her daughter's home-work, although it was clear even to her that doing so only increased the child's difficulties with her lessons. When at last, however, she had given this up at my request, I discovered from the child's analysis that her mother always tried to get her to say how the analysis was getting on. Once more by my desire she stopped doing this; but she then began telling the child that she had dark rings under her eyes in the mornings—a remark with which she had formerly accompanied her prohibition against masturbation. When these comments, which interfered with the analysis, had in turn been put a stop to, the mother began to pay an exaggerated attention to the child's clothes and to comment on the fact that she spent a long time in the w.c., and in this way increased the refractoriness of the child. At this point I gave up all attempts at influencing the mother on matters of this kind and accepted her interference as part of the analytic material; and after a certain time, during which I made no remonstrance, the interruptions diminished. In this case I was able to establish the fact that they all had the same unconscious meaning for the child: they signified enquiries and reproaches about masturbation. That they also had an analogous complexive origin in the mother was proved by the fact that her conscious desire to stop the educational mistakes that I objected to was quite unavailing. Indeed, it seemed as though my advice only increased her difficulties in regard to her child. I may remark that I have had similar experiences in a number of other cases.

difficulty in following that advice. Nevertheless, I do not, in the light of my own experiences, put much faith in the possibility of affecting the child's environment. It is better to rely upon the results achieved in the child itself, for these will enable it to make a better adaptation even to a difficult environment and will put it in a better position to meet any strains which that environment may lay upon it. This capacity for meeting strains has its limits, of course. Where the child's environment is too unfavourable we may not be completely successful in our analysis and may have to face the possibility of its again falling ill of a neurosis. I have, however, repeatedly found that even when this happens the results achieved, even if they did not involve a complete disappearance of the neurosis, have given a great measure of relief for the child in its difficult situation and have led to an improvement in its development. It seems quite safe to assume, moreover, that if we have brought about fundamental changes at the deepest levels, the illness, if it recurs, will not be so severe. It also seems worth while noting that in some cases of this sort a diminution in the child's neurosis has had a markedly favourable effect upon its neurotic environment.<sup>1</sup> It may also sometimes happen that after a successfully completed treatment the child can be removed to other surroundings, for instance to a boarding-school, a thing which had previously not been possible owing to its neurosis and lack of adaptability.

Whether it is advisable for the analyst to see the parents fairly frequently or whether it is wiser to limit meetings with them as much as possible must depend upon the circumstances of each individual case. In a number of instances I have found the second alternative the best means of avoiding friction in my relations with the mother.

<sup>1</sup> In the case of a fourteen-year-old boy, for instance, whose family life was extremely trying and unfortunate and who was brought to me for analysis on account of characterological difficulties, I learnt that the improvements brought about in him had had a very beneficial effect on the character of his sister, who was about a year older and had not been analysed, and that his mother's attitude to him had also changed for the better.



The ambivalence which parents have towards their child's analysis also helps to explain a fact which is at once surprising and painful to the inexperienced analyst—namely, that even the most successful treatment is not likely to receive much acknowledgment from the parents. Although I have, of course, often come across parents with plenty of insight, yet I have found in the majority of cases that they very easily forgot the symptoms which made them bring their child for analysis and overlooked the importance of any improvements that took place. In addition to this we must remember that they are not in a position to form a judgment upon one part, and that the most important, of our results. The analysis of adults proclaims its value by removing difficulties which interfere with the patient's life. We ourselves know, though the parents as a rule do not, that in child analysis we are preventing the occurrence of difficulties of the same kind or even of psychoses. A parent, while regarding serious symptoms in its child as an annoyance, does not as a rule recognize their full importance, for the very reason that they have not so great an effect on the child's actual life as a neurotic illness has on the life of a grown-up person. And yet I think we shall be well content to forgo our full due of recognition from that quarter so long as we bear in mind that the aim of our work is to secure the well-being of the child and not the gratitude of its mother and father.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TECHNIQUE OF ANALYSIS IN PUBERTY

**T**YPICAL analyses at the age of puberty differ in many essentials from analyses in the latency period. The impulses of the child are more powerful, the activity of his phantasy greater and his ego has other aims and another relation to reality. On the other hand there are strong points of similarity with the analysis of the small child, owing to the fact that at the age of puberty we once again meet with a greater dominance of the emotions and the unconscious and a much richer life of the imagination. Moreover, at this age manifestations of anxiety and affect are very much more acute than in the latency period, and are a kind of recrudescence of the liberations of anxiety which are so characteristic of small children.

But the efforts of the adolescent to ward off and modify his anxiety—a task which has all along been one of the main functions of the ego—are more successful than those of the small child. For he has developed his various interests and activities to a great extent with the object of mastering that anxiety, of over-compensating for it and of masking it from himself and from others. He achieves this in part by assuming the attitude of defiance and rebelliousness that is characteristic of puberty. This provides a great technical difficulty in analyses at puberty; for unless we very quickly gain access to the patient's anxiety and to those affects which he principally manifests in a defiant and negative attitude in the transference, it may very



well happen that the analysis will suddenly be broken off. I may say that in analysing boys of this age I have repeatedly found that they have anticipated violent physical attacks from me during their first sessions.

The fourteen-year-old Willy, for example, failed to come to his second hour's analysis and was only with great difficulty persuaded by his mother to 'give it one more chance'. During this third hour I succeeded in showing him that he identified me with the dentist. He asserted, it is true, that he was not afraid of the dentist (of whom my appearance reminded him) but the interpretation of the material that he brought was sufficient to convince him that he was; for it showed him that he expected not only to have a tooth pulled out but his whole body cut in pieces. By lessening his anxiety in this respect I established the analytic situation. True, in the further course of his analysis it often happened that large quantities of anxiety were liberated, but his resistance was in essence kept within the analytic situation and the continuance of the analysis was assured.

In other cases, too, where I have observed signs of latent anxiety, I have set about interpreting them in the very first hour of treatment, and thus at once begun to reduce the child's negative transference. But even in cases where the anxiety is not immediately recognizable it may suddenly break out if the analytic situation is not soon established by interpreting the unconscious material. This material is closely analogous to that presented by the small child. At the ages of puberty and pre-puberty boys busy themselves in their phantasy with people and things in the same way as small children play with toys. What Peter, aged three and three-quarters, expressed by means of little carts and trains and motors, the fourteen-year-old Willy expressed in long discourses, lasting for months, on the constructional differences between various kinds of motors, bicycles, motor-cycles, and so on. Where Peter pushed along carts and compared them with one another, Willy would be passionately interested in the question of which cars and which drivers would win some race; and whereas

Peter paid a tribute of admiration to the toy man's skill in driving and made him perform all sorts of feats, Willy for his part was never tired of singing the praises of his idols of the sporting world.

The imaginative activities of the adolescent are, however, more adapted to reality and to his stronger ego-interests, and their phantasy content is therefore much less easily recognizable than in small children. Moreover, the adolescent's actual activities are greater and his relations to reality more strong, and this again alters the character of his phantasies.<sup>1</sup> The impulse to give evidence of his courage in the real world and the desire for competition with others become more prominent. This is one of the reasons why sport, which offers so much scope for rivalry with others no less than for admiration of their brilliant feats and which also provides a means of overcoming anxiety, plays so large a part in the adolescent's life and phantasies.

These phantasies, which give expression to his rivalry with his father for the possession of his mother and in respect of sexual potency, are accompanied, as in the small child, by feelings of hatred and aggression in every form and are also often followed by anxiety and a sense of guilt. But the mechanisms peculiar to the age of puberty conceal these facts very much better than do the mechanisms of the small child. The boy at puberty takes as his models heroes, great men, and so on. He can the more easily maintain his identification with these objects since they are far removed from him; and he can also make a more stable over-compensation towards them for the negative feelings attaching to his father-imagos. In thus dividing up his father-imago he diverts his violent destructive tendencies to other objects. If, therefore, we bring together his over-compen-

<sup>1</sup> In many analyses of boys of the pre-pubertal period or sometimes even the latency period, most of the time is taken up with stories about Red Indians, or with detective stories, or with phantasies about travel, adventures and fighting, told in serial form and often associated with descriptions of imaginary technical inventions, such as special kinds of boats, machines, cars, contrivances used in warfare, and so on.



satory admiration for some objects and his excessive hatred and scorn for others, such as schoolmasters, relations, etc., which we uncover during analysis, we can find our way to a complete analysis of his Oedipus complex and affects just as we can in the case of quite young children.

In some instances repression has led to such an extreme limitation of personality that the adolescent has only one single definite interest left—say, a particular sport. A single interest of this sort is equivalent to an unvarying game played by a small child to the exclusion of all others. It has become the representative of all his repressed phantasies and has the character of an obsessional symptom rather than a sublimation. Monotonous stories about football or bicycling may for months form the one topic of conversation in his analysis. Out of this representative content, apparently so absolutely lacking in imagination, we have to elicit the true material of his repressed phantasies. If we follow a technique analogous to that of dream- and game-interpretation and take into account the mechanisms of displacement, condensation, symbolic representation and so on, and if we notice the connections between minute signs of anxiety in him and his general affective state we can get behind this façade of monotonous interest and gradually penetrate into the deepest complexes of his mind.<sup>1</sup> An analogy is to be found here with a certain extreme type of latency period analysis. We may recall the seven-year-old Greta's<sup>2</sup> monotonous drawing, which was quite lacking in phantasy but which was all I had to go on for months in her analysis; or Egon's case,<sup>3</sup> which was of a still more extreme type. These children showed to an excessive degree the limitation of phantasy and of means of representation that is normal in the latency period. I have come to the conclusion that, on the one hand, where we find a similar

<sup>1</sup> Abraham, as he himself told me, carried out an analysis of a boy of about twelve years old mainly in what he described as 'stamp-language', in which details like the torn corners of a stamp, for instance, would afford a means of approaching his castration complex.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter IV.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chapter IV.

limitation of interests and means of expression at the age of puberty we are dealing with a protracted period of latency, and, on the other, where there is an extensive limitation of imaginative activities (as in inhibitions in play, etc.) in early childhood it is a case of premature onset of that period. In either case, whether latency begins too soon or ends too late, severe disturbances in the child's development are indicated; for such an undue extension of that period is accompanied by an undue increase of the phenomena that normally go with it.

I shall now bring forward one or two examples to illustrate what seems to me the proper technique for analysis at the age of puberty. In the analysis of the fifteen-year-old Bill, his uninterrupted chain of associations about his bicycle and about particular parts of it—for example, his anxiety lest he should have damaged it by riding too fast—had provided abundant material concerning his castration complex and his sense of guilt about masturbation.<sup>1</sup> In this connection it came out that he had anxiety and feelings of guilt about his relations with a certain friend of his, but that these feelings were not based on reality but went back to an earlier relationship he had had with a boy called Tony. He told me about a bicycling tour he had made with his friend, in the course of which they had exchanged their bicycles and he had been afraid, for no reason, that his bicycle had been damaged. On the basis of this and other things of the same kind which he told me, I pointed out to him that his fear seemed to go back to sexual acts which he had done with his friend Tony in early childhood. When I gave him my reasons for thinking so he agreed and remembered some details about that sexual relation. His sense of guilt about it and his consequent

<sup>1</sup> That riding a bicycle symbolizes masturbation and coitus has been shown over and over again. In my paper, 'Early Analysis' (1923), I have referred to the general symbolic significance of balls, footballs, bicycles, etc., as the penis, and have discussed more fully the libidinal phantasies connected with various sports in consequence of these symbolic equations; so that by dealing with the patient's stories about sports in their symbolic aspect and relating them to his general affective state, the analyst can arrive at his libidinal and aggressive phantasies and at the sense of guilt which they give rise to.



fear of having damaged his penis and his body were quite unconscious.<sup>1</sup>

In the analysis of the fourteen-year-old Willy, the introductory phase of which has been described above, I was able to discover, by the help of similar topics, the reason for his strong feelings of guilt about his younger brother. When, for instance, Willy spoke about his steam-engine being in need of repair, he at once went on to give associations about his brother's engine which would never be any good again. His resistance in connection with this and his wish that the hour would soon come to an end turned out to be caused by his fear of his mother, who might discover the sexual relations which had existed between him and his younger brother and which he partly remembered. These relations had left behind them severe unconscious feelings of guilt in him, for he as the elder and stronger had at times forced his brother into them. Since then he had felt responsible for the defective development of his brother, who was seriously neurotic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bill was a nervous and inhibited boy and had various neurotic difficulties. His analysis only lasted three months (54 sessions), but according to a report I had of him six years after it, he was developing very well.

<sup>2</sup> Willy's analysis was intended as a prophylactic measure. He suffered, it is true, from depressions, but these were not of an abnormal character. He was in addition not fond of company, rather inactive and withdrawn into himself and not on good terms with his brothers and sisters. But his social adaptation was normal; he was a good scholar and there was nothing definitely wrong with him. His analysis occupied 190 sessions. As a result of it—I last had news of him three years after its termination—this boy, who could certainly be called a normal child, underwent changes of such a nature that even people outside his immediate circle, who did not know he was being analysed, noticed them. It turned out, for instance, that his disinclination to go to the theatre or the cinema was connected with a severe inhibition of his epistemophilic instincts, although, as has been said, he did his lessons well. When this inhibition had been removed, his mental horizon became wider and his general intelligence improved. The analysis of his strongly passive attitude started him on a number of activities. His attitude to his brothers grew better, as did his powers of social adaptation. These and other changes made a much more free, well-balanced and mature person of him; and moreover these changes, though not in themselves perhaps very decisive, reflected certain deeper changes which would almost certainly become of importance later on. For along with the removal of his inactive attitude in ordinary life there went a change in his sexual orientation. His heterosexual tendencies became very much stronger and he got rid of certain difficulties which are admittedly the cause of disturbances of potency in later life. Furthermore, it turned out that his depressions were allied to thoughts of suicide

In connection with certain associations about a steamer trip that he was going to make with a friend, it occurred to Willy that the boat might sink, and he suddenly drew his railway season-ticket out of his pocket and asked me if I could tell him when it expired. He did not know, he said, which numbers referred to the month and which to the day. The date of 'expiry' of his ticket meant the date of his own death; and the trip with his friend was the mutual masturbation which he had performed in early childhood with his brother, and also with a friend, and which had given rise to feelings of guilt and fear of death in him. Willy went on to say that he had emptied his electric battery in order not to dirty the box in which it was packed. He next told me how he had played football with a ping-pong ball with his brother indoors, and said that the ping-pong balls were not dangerous and one was not liable to get one's head banged or to break the windows with them. Here he remembered an incident of his early childhood, when he had received a hard blow from a football and lost consciousness. He had suffered no injury, but his nose or his teeth might easily have been hurt, he said. The memory of this incident proved to be a cover memory for his relations with an older friend who had seduced him. The ping-pong balls represented his younger brother's comparatively small and harmless penis, and the football that of his older friend. But since in his relations to his brother he identified himself with the friend who had seduced him, those relations aroused a strong sense of guilt in him on account of the supposed damage he had done his brother. His emptying

and went deeper than appeared at first. And his withdrawal into himself and dislike of company were based on a very decided flight from reality. These, I may add, were only some of the difficulties from which the boy was suffering, as his deep-going analysis showed.

In this connection I should like to point out how severe the difficulties of even normal children are (cf. Inge's case, for instance). This fact of analytic experience is borne out by observations of everyday life; for it is surprising how often people who have hitherto seemed quite normal will break down with a neurosis or commit suicide for some quite slight cause. But, as the treatment of normal adults shows, even those persons who never do have a neurotic illness are burdened with inhibitions in intellectual and sexual matters and with a lack of capacity for enjoyment whose extent cannot be gauged except by psycho-analysis.



of the battery and his fear of dirtying the box were determined by his anxiety about the defilement and injury which he had brought upon his brother by putting his penis into his mouth and forcing him to perform *fellatio* and which he himself expected to suffer as a result of having done that act with his older friend. His fear that he had dirtied and injured his brother internally was founded on sadistic phantasies about his brother and led to still deeper causes of his anxiety and guilt, namely, his sadistic masturbation phantasies directed against his parents. Thus, starting from his confession about his relations with his brother—a confession expressed in symbolic form in his associations about the steam-engine which needed repairing—we gained access not only to other experiences and events in his life but to the deepest levels of anxiety in him. I should also like to draw attention to the wealth of symbolic forms in which the material was put forward. This is typical of analyses at the age of puberty, and, as in analyses of early childhood, calls for a correspondingly extensive interpretation of the symbols employed.

Let us now turn to the analysis of girls at the age of puberty. The onset of menstruation arouses strong anxiety in the girl. In addition to the various other meanings which it has and with which we are familiar, it is, in the last resort, the outward and visible sign that the interior of her body and the children contained there have been totally destroyed. For this reason the development of a completely feminine attitude in her takes longer and is beset by more difficulties than is the case with the boy in establishing his masculine position. As a result, her masculine components may become reinforced at the age of puberty; or she may only accomplish a partial development, mostly on the intellectual side, remaining, as far as her sexual life and personality are concerned, in the latency stage sometimes even beyond the age of puberty. In analysing the active type of girl with an attitude of rivalry towards the male sex, we often begin by getting material similar to that produced by the boy. Very soon, however, the differences in structure

between the masculine and the feminine castration complexes make themselves felt, as we get down to the deeper levels of her mind and meet with the anxiety and sense of guilt which are derived from her feelings of aggression against her mother and which have led her to reject the feminine rôle and contributed to the formation of her castration complex. We now discover that it is her fear of having her body destroyed by her mother which has caused her thus to refuse to adopt the position of woman and mother. In this stage of her analysis the ideas she produces are very similar to what we get in small girls. In the second type, the girl whose sexual life is strongly inhibited, analysis is at first usually occupied with subjects of the kind put forward in the latency period. Stories about her school, her wish to please her mistress and do her lessons well, her interest in needlework, etc., take up a great part of the time. In these cases, accordingly, we must use the methods appropriate to the latency period and go on resolving her anxiety piece-meal so that her repressed imaginative activities are gradually freed. When we have done this to some extent she will bring out more strongly those fears and guilty feelings which, while leading in the first type of girl to an identification with the father, have in her case militated against the adoption of a feminine rôle and caused a general inhibition of her sexual life. Compared to the adult woman, girls at the age of puberty are exposed to an anxiety which is much stronger and more acute in its expression, even where their position is predominantly a feminine one. A defiant and negative attitude in the transference is characteristic of this age and necessitates prompt establishment of the analytic situation. Again, analysis will often show that the girl's feminine position is falsely exaggerated and thrust into the foreground so as to conceal and keep under the anxiety arising from her masculinity complex and, deeper still, the fears derived from her earliest feminine attitude.<sup>1</sup>

I shall now give an excerpt from an analysis which,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade' (1929).



though not absolutely typical of that period, will illustrate my general remarks on the technique to be applied to girls in pre-puberty and puberty, and will also help to demonstrate the difficulties attendant upon their treatment at that age.

Ilse, aged twelve, presented certain marked schizoid features and her personality was unusually stunted. Not only had she not reached the level of an eight- or nine-year-old child intellectually, but she did not even possess the interests normal to children of that age. She was, moreover, inhibited in every imaginative activity to a striking degree. She had never played in the true sense of the word and took no pleasure in any occupation whatever except a compulsive and unimaginative sort of drawing, the character of which will be discussed later. For instance, she did not care for the company of others, did not like walking in the streets and looking at things, and had an aversion to the theatre, cinema and any kind of entertainment. Her chief interest was in food, and disappointments in this respect always led to fits of rage and depression. She was very jealous of her brothers and sisters, but less on account of having to share her mother's love with them than for some fancied preference in what her mother gave them to eat. This unfriendly attitude towards her mother and her brothers and sisters went along with a poor social adaptation in general. She had no friends and apparently no desire to be liked or thought well of. Her relations with her mother were especially bad. From time to time she had violent outbursts of rage against her but she was at the same time strongly fixated to her. A long separation from her home surroundings—she was sent away for two years to a boarding school—had made no lasting change in her condition.

When Ilse was about eleven and a half years old her mother discovered her having sexual intercourse with her elder brother. This incident aroused recollections in the mother which told her that it was not the first of its kind. Analysis showed that her conviction was well founded and

also that the relationship between Ilse and her brother was continued after its discovery.

It was only at the urgent desire of her mother that Ilse came to be analysed, impelled by that uncritical docility far behind her years which, along with her attitude of hatred, characterized her fixation to her mother. At first I got her to lie down. Her scanty associations were concerned mainly with a comparison between the furniture in my room and in her home, especially her own room. She left in a state of great resistance, did not want to come to analysis next day, and was only with great difficulty persuaded by her mother to do so. Now in cases of this kind it is necessary to establish the analytic situation quickly, for the support given by the child's family will not last long. I had been struck by the movements which Ilse had made with her fingers in her first hour. She had constantly been smoothing the folds of her frock as she made a few remarks about my furniture and compared it with hers at home. So during the second hour, on her comparing a teapot I had in my room with one at home that was like it but not so beautiful, I started giving interpretations. I explained that her comparison between objects really meant a comparison between people; she was comparing me or her mother with herself to her own disadvantage because she felt guilty about having masturbated and believed it had done her some bodily harm. I said that her continual smoothing out of the folds of her dress meant both masturbation and an attempt to repair her genitals.<sup>1</sup> She denied this strongly; yet I could see the effect the interpretation had on her from the increase in the material she produced. Also, she did not refuse to come for her next hour. Nevertheless, in view of her marked infantility and her difficulty in expressing herself in words and the acute anxiety from which she appeared to suffer, I thought it advisable to change over to play technique.

<sup>1</sup> An interpretation of this kind is not given in order to detect something (such as masturbation) which the child is consciously concealing and so to get a hold over her. The object is to trace back the sense of guilt attaching to the masturbation (or whatever it may be) to its deeper sources and in that way to diminish it.



During the months that followed, Ilse's associations consisted in the main of apparently utterly unimaginative drawings done with compasses, in which measuring and calculating the component parts played an important rôle. The compulsive nature of this occupation became increasingly clear.<sup>1</sup> After much slow and patient work it emerged that the various forms and colours of these component parts represented different people. Her compulsion to measure and count proved to be derived from her curiosity, which had become obsessive, to know for certain about the inside of her mother's body and the number of children there, the differences between the sexes, and so forth. In this case, too, the inhibition of her whole personality and intellectual growth had arisen from a very early repression of her epistemophilic instincts which had in consequence undergone a complete reversal and changed into an obstinate antipathy to all knowledge. With the help of this drawing, measuring and counting we made considerable progress and Ilse's anxiety became less acute. Six months after the beginning of her treatment, therefore, I suggested that she should try again to carry on her analysis lying down, and she did so. Her anxiety grew more acute at once; but I was soon able to reduce it, and from that time on her analysis went faster. Owing to the poverty and monotony of her associations, this part of her analysis in no way came up to the normal standard of analytic work at this age, it is true; but as it proceeded it approximated more and more closely to that standard. She now began to want very much to satisfy her teacher and get good reports from her, but her severe inhibition in learning rendered the fulfilment of this wish impossible. It was only now that she began to be fully conscious of the disappointment and suffering which her deficiencies caused her. She would cry for hours at home before beginning to write her essay for school, and would in fact fail to get it done. She would also

<sup>1</sup> Ilse had, in fact, no real interests that she could have talked about. She was, it is true, a passionate reader; but she did not care what the book was about, for reading was for her chiefly a means of escaping from reality.

be in despair if, before going to school, she found that she had not mended her stockings and they were in holes. Again and again her associations to her failure in learning led us to questions of a deficiency in her clothes or her body. For months on end her analytic hour was filled, along with stories about her school, with monotonous remarks about her cuffs, the collar of her blouse, her ties and every single item of her clothing—how they were too long or too short or dirty or not the right colour.<sup>1</sup>

My material for analysis was at this time mainly taken from the details of her failure in her school essays. To her unceasing complaints that she had nothing to write about the subject set I always replied by asking her to associate on that subject, and these forced phantasies<sup>2</sup> were very instructive.<sup>3</sup> Doing her school work meant an acknowledgment of the fact that she did not know, in the sense that she was ignorant of what went on when her parents copulated, or of what was inside her mother; and all the anxiety and obstinacy connected with this fundamental ignorance were stimulated anew in her by each school task. As in many other children, having to write an essay signified for her having to make a confession, and this touched her anxiety and feelings of guilt very nearly. For instance, one of the subjects set, 'A Description of the Kurfürstendamm',<sup>4</sup> led to associations about shop windows and their contents and about things she would like to possess, as, for instance, a very large decorated match-box which she had seen in a shop window when she was out walking with her mother. They had actually gone into the shop and her mother had struck one of the large matches to try it. She, Ilse, would have liked to do the same but refrained out of fear of her mother and the shop assistant, who represented

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (1930).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ferenczi, 'On Forced Phantasies' (1924).

<sup>3</sup> In a paper, 'History as Phantasy' (1929), Ella Sharpe has given an account of a case of an adult psychotic, in which for a long time she got her material for analysis almost entirely from the patient's interest in historical events and was able on that basis to penetrate to the lowest mental levels.

<sup>4</sup> One of the main shopping centres of Berlin.



a father-imago. The match-box and its contents, like the contents of the shop windows, represented her mother's body, and the striking of the match meant coitus between her parents. Her envy of her mother, who possessed her father in copulation, and her aggressive impulses against her were the cause of her deepest feelings of guilt. Another subject for a composition was 'St. Bernard Dogs'. When Ilse had mentioned their cleverness in rescuing people who were freezing to death she began to have a great resistance. Her further associations showed that children buried in the snow were in her imagination children who had been abandoned. It proved that the difficulties she felt about this subject were based on her death-wishes against her younger sisters, both before and after their birth, and her fear lest she should herself be abandoned by her mother as a punishment. Moreover, every school task she had to do, whether oral or written, stood to her for a confession about a whole number of things. And to these difficulties were added special inhibitions about mathematics, geometry, geography and so on.<sup>1</sup>

As Ilse's difficulties in learning continued to diminish, a very great change took place in her whole nature. She became capable of social adaptation, made friends with other girls and got on much better with her parents and her brothers and sisters. Her interests now approximated to what was suitable to a girl of her age; and as she was now a good scholar and a favourite with her mistresses and had become an almost too-obedient daughter, her family were completely satisfied with the success of her analysis and saw no reason for its continuance. But I was not of their opinion. It was obvious that at this point, when she was thirteen and physical puberty had already begun, Ilse had only just accomplished a really successful transition to the latency period and grown able to satisfy the standards of that period and to achieve a social adaptation. However

<sup>1</sup> In my paper, 'The Rôle of the School in the Libidinal Development of the Child' (1923), I have discussed the wide significance of specific inhibitions attaching to each special branch of knowledge.

gratifying these analytic results might be, the child I saw before me was still a completely un-independent being and still excessively fixated to her mother. Though her circle of interests was greatly widening she was still hardly capable of having any ideas of her own. She usually prefaced her expressions with such words as 'Mother thinks'. Her wish to please, the great care that she now took of her appearance in contrast to her former total indifference to it, her need for love and recognition and even her efforts to do better than her schoolmates—all these sprang almost entirely from her desire to please her mother and her mistresses. Her homosexual attitude was very strong and there were as yet scarcely any heterosexual impulses visible in her.

The continuation of the analysis, which now proceeded in a normal way, led to great changes not only in this respect but in the whole development of Ilse's personality. In this she was very much helped by the fact that we were able to analyse the great anxiety which the onset of menstruation aroused in her at this time. Her excessive positive attachment to her mother, against whom she nevertheless still had occasional outbursts of rage, was now seen to be caused by anxiety and a sense of guilt. Further analysis, by completely uncovering her original attitude of rivalry with her mother and the intense hatred and envy she felt towards her on account of her possession of the father (and his penis) and the pleasure she gave him, was able greatly to strengthen her heterosexual tendencies and diminish her homosexual ones. It was only now that her psychological puberty really set in. Before this, she had not been in a position to criticize her mother and form her own opinions, because this would have signified making a violent sadistic attack upon her mother. The analysis of this sadism enabled Ilse to achieve an independence of thought and action in keeping with her age. At the same time her opposition to her mother appeared more plainly, but it did not lead to special difficulties since these were outweighed by her all-round improvement. Somewhat later, after an analysis



extending over 425 hours, Ilse was able to achieve a firm and affectionate relationship with her mother and at the same time to establish a satisfactory heterosexual position.<sup>1</sup>

In this case, we see how the girl's failure to deal with her over-strong sense of guilt was able to disturb not only her transition to the latency period but the whole later course of her development. Her affects, which found an outlet in occasional outbursts of rage, had been displaced and her anxiety unsuccessfully modified. Although she made the unmistakable impression of being an unhappy and unsatisfied individual, she was not aware of her own anxiety and of her dissatisfaction with herself. It was a great advance in her analysis when I was able to make her understand that she was unhappy and to show her that she felt inferior and unloved and that she was in despair about it and, in her hopelessness, would make no attempt to gain the love of others. After this, in place of her former apparent indifference to affection and praise from the world around her there appeared an exaggerated longing for them, which is characteristic of the latency period and which led to that attitude of extreme obedience and fixation to her mother described above. The later part of her analysis, which uncovered the deeper foundations of her severe feelings of guilt and of her failure, was far easier now that she was fully aware of her illness.

Allusion has earlier been made to sexual acts committed between Ilse and her brother, who was a year and a half older than herself. Not long after I had begun her analysis I undertook the treatment of her brother as well. Both analyses showed that the sexual connection between them went back to early childhood and had been continued throughout the latency period, although at rare intervals and in a mitigated form. The remarkable thing was that Ilse had no conscious sense of guilt about it but detested her brother. The analysis of her brother had the

<sup>1</sup> Two and a half years after the completion of her analysis I heard that she was developing well in spite of great external difficulties.

effect of making him put a complete stop to these sexual relations, and this at first aroused a still more intense hatred of him in her. But later on in her analysis, along with the other changes brought about in her, she began to have strong feelings of guilt and anxiety about these episodes.<sup>1</sup>

Ilse's method of modifying her feelings of guilt, by which she refused all responsibility for her actions and adopted a very unpleasant, defiant and antipathetic attitude to her environment, is, I have found, typical of a certain class of asocial individual. In Kenneth,<sup>2</sup> for instance, who displayed such complete indifference to the opinions of others and such extraordinary want of shame, there were similar mechanisms at work. And they are to be found even in the more normal, merely 'naughty' child. Analyses of children of every age go to show that the lessening of their latent feelings of guilt and anxiety leads to a better social adaptation and to a strengthening of their sense of personal responsibility—the more so the deeper the analysis goes.

This case also gives us certain indications for deciding which factors in the development of a girl are necessary for her to make a successful transition to the latency period, and which to make the further transition to puberty. As has already been said, we often find that at the age of puberty the girl is still in a protracted latency period. By analysing the early stages of her development and the early anxiety and feelings of guilt derived from her aggressiveness against her mother, we can enable her to make not only a satisfactory transition to the stage of puberty but a subsequent transition to adult life and can thus ensure the complete development of her feminine sex-life and personality.

There yet remains to call attention to the technique employed in the treatment of this case. In the first part of it I used the technique belonging to the latency period, and

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter VII. we shall return to a fuller discussion of this relationship in another connection.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter IV.



in the second that belonging to puberty. Reference has repeatedly been made in these pages to the connecting links between the modes of analysis appropriate to different stages. Let me say at once that I regard the technique of early analysis as the basis of the technique applicable to children of every age. In the last chapter I have said that my method of analysing children of the latency period was entirely based on the play technique I had worked out for small children. But as the cases discussed in the present chapter show, the technique of early analysis is indispensable for many patients at the age of puberty as well; for we shall be unsuccessful with many of these often very difficult cases unless we sufficiently take into account the adolescent's need for action and for expression of phantasy and are careful to regulate the amount of anxiety liberated and, in general, adopt an exceedingly elastic technique.

In analysing the deepest strata of the mind we have to observe certain definite conditions. In comparison with the modified anxiety of the higher strata, the anxiety belonging to the deep levels is far greater both in amount and intensity, and it is therefore imperative that its liberation should be duly regulated. We do this by continually referring the anxiety back to its sources and resolving it and by systematically analysing the transference-situation.

In the first chapters of this book I have described how, in cases where the child was very timid or unfriendly towards me at first, I immediately began to analyse its negative transference and to detect and interpret the hidden signs of latent anxiety in it in good time, before they became manifest and led to an anxiety-attack. In order to be able to do this the analyst must be thoroughly conversant with the anxiety-reactions of the earliest phases of the child's development and with the defensive mechanisms employed by its ego against them. In fact, he must have a theoretic knowledge of the structure of the deepest layers of the mind. His interpretative work must be directed to that part of the material which is associated with the greatest amount of latent anxiety and must uncover the anxiety-

situations which have been activated. He must also establish the connection between that latent anxiety and (a) the particular sadistic phantasies underlying it, (b) the defensive mechanisms employed by the ego to master it. That is to say, in resolving a given piece of anxiety by interpretation he should follow up a little way the threats of the super-ego, the impulses of the id and the attempts of the ego to reconcile the two. In this way he will be able gradually to bring into consciousness the whole content of the particular piece of anxiety which is being stirred up at the time. To do this it is absolutely necessary that he should keep to strictly analytic methods in regard to his patient, since it is only by abstaining from exerting any educational or moral influence whatever on the child that he can ever analyse the deepest levels of its mind. For if he prevents it from bringing out certain id-impulses he will inevitably keep down other impulses as well; and even in the small child he will find it hard enough without that to make his way down to its most primitive oral-sadistic and anal-sadistic phantasies.

Moreover, by having the liberation of its anxiety systematically regulated the child will not suffer from a too great accumulation of anxiety during intervals in its analysis or if the treatment is broken off before being completed. In such circumstances, it is true, the anxiety often does become more acute for the time being, but the child's ego is soon able to bind it and modify it, and to a greater degree than before analysis. In some instances the child may escape even a passing phase of more acute anxiety of this kind.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a number of instances, ranging from children of three to twelve years of age, in which I had to break off analysis after a treatment of from three to nine months, I have found that the child presented a considerably less disquieting picture than when it first came to me. Besides the cases of Rita, Trude and Ruth, which the reader will recall (Chapter II.), I may mention the case of a boy of twelve who came to me with outspoken ideas of being poisoned. After six months' analysis he had to go abroad. By that time his fears had not only been lessened but he showed favourable changes in his general condition, which were observable, among other things, in a greater ease of manner. (When last I heard of him, two and a half years after the end of his treatment, this improvement had been maintained.) In every instance, moreover, the child itself has felt better. And



After having had our attention so persistently called to the similarities between the age of puberty and the early period of the child's life, let us once more shortly review their differences. The fuller development of the ego at the age of puberty and its more grown-up interests demand a technique approximating to that of adult analysis. In certain children or in certain sections of an analysis we may have to employ other methods of representation, but, in general, in analyses at the age of puberty we have to rely chiefly on verbal associations in order to enable the adolescent to establish a complete relation with reality and with his normal field of interest.

For these reasons, before undertaking the analysis of children at puberty the analyst must thoroughly understand the technique of adult analysis. In general, indeed, I consider a regular training in the analysis of adults as a necessary groundwork for special training as a child-analyst. No one who has not gained adequate experience and done a fair amount of work on adults should enter upon the technically more difficult field of child analysis. In order to be able to preserve the fundamental principles of analytic treatment in the modified form necessitated by the child's mechanisms at the various stages of its development, he must, besides being fully trained in the technique of early analysis, possess complete mastery of the technique employed in analysing adults.

although an unfinished analysis of this sort cannot do more than lessen the child's neurosis, it does much, in my judgment, to obviate the danger of a psychosis or severe obsessional neurosis setting in later on. I have come to the conviction that every step, however slight, in the direction of resolving anxiety in the deepest levels of the mind effects, if not a cure, at least an improvement of the child's condition.

## CHAPTER VI

### NEUROSIS IN CHILDREN

**I**N the preceding pages we have discussed the technique by which children can be as deeply analysed as grown-up persons. We shall now go on to consider the problem of indications for treatment.

The first question that arises is: what difficulties are to be regarded as normal and what as neurotic in children—when are they simply being naughty and when are they really ill? In general, one expects to meet with certain typical difficulties, varying considerably in quantity and effect, which, so long as they do not exceed certain bounds, are regarded as inevitable accompaniments of the growth of the child. But for this very reason, we are, I think, inclined to pay too little attention to the question how far these everyday difficulties are to be regarded as beginnings and signs of serious developmental disturbances.

Derangements in eating, if they are at all serious, and, above all, manifestations of anxiety, whether in the form of night-terrors or phobias, are generally recognized as definitely neurotic manifestations. But a study of small children shows that their anxiety takes on very various and disguised forms, and that even at the early age of two or three they exhibit modifications of anxiety which imply the action of a very complicated process of repression. After they have got over their night-terrors, for instance, they are still for some time subject to disturbances of sleep, such as getting off to sleep late, waking up early, having a restless or easily disturbed sleep, being unable to sleep in the afternoon—all of which are found in analysis to be



modified forms of the original *pavor nocturnus*. To this group also belong the many fads and ceremonies, often of so disquieting a nature, which children indulge in at bedtime. In the same way, their original crude disturbances in eating<sup>1</sup> will often turn into a habit of eating slowly or not masticating properly or into a general lack of appetite or even merely into bad table manners.

It is easy to see that the anxiety children feel with regard to particular people often gives place to general timidity. Still later it appears often as no more than an inhibition in social intercourse or as shyness. All these degrees of fear are only modifications of their original anxiety which, as in the case of fear of people, may determine their whole social behaviour later on. An outspoken phobia of certain animals will go over into a dislike of them or of animals in general. Fear of inanimate things, which to small children are always endowed with life, will come out later on as an inhibition of activities connected with them. Thus in one instance a child's phobia of the telephone apparatus became, in later years, an aversion to telephoning; and in other cases, a fear of engines gave rise to a dislike of travelling or a tendency to get very tired on journeys. In others again, a fear of streets grew into a disinclination to go out for walks; and so on. Into this class come inhibitions in sport<sup>2</sup> and active games, and these inhibitions can show themselves in all kinds of ways, such as distaste for special forms of sport or general dislike of them, or liability to fatigue or clumsiness, etc. To this class, too, belong the idiosyncrasies, habits and inhibitions of the normal adult. The normal adult can rationalize his dislikes—which are never wanting—in all sorts of ways by calling the object of them 'boring', 'in bad taste' or 'unhygienic' and many other things, whereas in a child dislikes and habits of this kind which, it must be admitted, are more intense and less adapted socially than in the adult, are attributed to 'naughti-

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter IX. we shall discuss the nature of the anxiety underlying infantile disturbances in eating.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my paper 'Infant Analysis' (1923).

ness'. Yet they are invariably an expression of anxiety and feelings of guilt. They are intimately related to phobias and usually to obsessional ceremonials as well and are complexively determined in every detail; and for this reason they are often very resistant to educative measures, though they can frequently be resolved by analysis like any neurotic symptom.

Space forbids the mention of more than one or two instances from this interesting field of observation. In one boy, opening his eyes wide and making a face was meant to reassure him that he was not going to go blind. In another, blinking served the same purpose. In yet a third, keeping his mouth open and then whistling signified a confession of having performed *fellatio*, followed by a withdrawal of that confession. The unruly behaviour of children while being bathed or having their hair washed is, as I have repeatedly found, nothing but a hidden fear of being castrated or having their whole body destroyed. Nose-picking, in both children and adults, has turned out to represent, among other things, an anal attack on the bodies of their parents. The difficulties parents and nurses have in persuading children to perform the simplest services or acts of consideration—difficulties which often make things so unpleasant for the person in charge—invariably turn out to be determined by anxiety. A child's dislike, for instance, of taking an object out of a box will not infrequently be due to the fact that doing so signifies an enactment of its phantasy of making an attack on its mother's body.

Children often show a kind of over-liveliness which often goes along with an overbearing and defiant manner and which people frequently mistake either for a special sign of 'temperament' or for disobedience, according to their point of view. Such behaviour is, like aggression, an over-compensation for anxiety, and this method of modifying anxiety greatly influences the child's character-formation and its later attitude to society.<sup>1</sup> The 'fidgetiness'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Reich, 'Phobie und Charakterbildung' (1930).



which often accompanies this over-animation is, in my judgment, an important symptom. The motor discharges which the little child achieves through fidgeting often become condensed at the beginning of the latency period into definite stereotyped movements which are usually lost to view in the general picture of excessive mobility which the child presents. At the age of puberty, or sometimes even earlier, they reappear or become more obvious and form the basis of a *tic*.<sup>1</sup>

Repeated reference has been made to the great importance of inhibitions in play. These inhibitions, which can be concealed under the most diverse forms, are present in every degree of strength. Dislike of certain definite games and a lack of perseverance in any one game are examples of partial inhibition in play. Again, some children have to have someone who will play a large part in the game, take the initiative in it, fetch the playthings, and so on. Others only like games that they can play exactly according to set rules, or only like certain kinds of games (in which case they usually play them with great assiduity). These children suffer from a powerful repression of phantasy, accompanied, as a rule, by compulsive traits; and their games have the character of an obsessional symptom rather than a sublimation.

There is a kind of play behind which—especially during the transition into the latency period—stereotyped or rigid movements are concealed. For instance, an eight-year-old boy used to play at being a policeman on point duty and used to carry out certain movements and repeat them for hours together, remaining motionless in certain attitudes for long periods at a time. In other cases some particular game will conceal a peculiar restlessness closely allied to *tic*.

A dislike of active games in general and want of skill in them is a forerunner of later inhibitions in sport and is always an important sign that something is wrong.

<sup>1</sup> In my paper, 'Zur Genese des Tic' (1925), I have shown that a *tic* should often be regarded as a sign of faulty development and of the existence of deep-seated and concealed disturbances.

In many cases inhibitions in playing are the basis of inhibitions in learning. In several cases where children who were inhibited in play did become good scholars it turned out that their impulse to learn was mainly compulsive, and some of them later on—especially at puberty—developed severe limitations in their capacity to learn. Inhibitions in learning, like inhibitions in play, can possess every degree of strength and every variety of form, such as indolence, lack of interest, strong dislike of particular subjects or an inability to learn lessons except at the last moment or under compulsion. Such inhibitions in learning are often the basis of later vocational inhibitions whose earliest signs, therefore, are often already to be seen in the small child's inhibitions in play.

In my paper, 'The Development of a Child' (1921), I have said that the resistance children show to sexual enlightenment is a very important indication of something being wrong. If they abstain from asking any questions on the subject—and such an abstention often succeeds to, or alternates with, obsessive asking—we must regard it as a symptom founded upon often very serious affections of the epistemophilic instincts. As we well know, the wearisome questionings of the child are often prolonged into the brooding mania of the adult with which neurotic disorders are always associated.

A tendency to plaintiveness in children and a habit of falling down and knocking or hurting themselves are to be regarded as expressions of various fears and feelings of guilt. Analysis of children has convinced me that such recurrent minor accidents—and sometimes more serious ones—are substitutes for self-inflicted injuries of a graver kind and may represent attempts at suicide with insufficient means. With many children, especially boys, excessive sensibility to pain is often replaced very early on by an exaggerated indifference to it, but this indifference is, I have found, only an elaborate defence against, and modification of, anxiety.

The child's attitude towards presents is also very typical.



Many children are quite insatiable in this respect, and no present can give them real and lasting satisfaction or lead to anything but disappointment. Others have too little desire for them and are equally indifferent to every gift. In grown-up people we can observe the same two attitudes. Among women there are those who are always longing for new clothes but who never really enjoy them and apparently never have 'anything to put on'. These are generally women who are always hunting after amusement and who more often than not change their love-object very easily and cannot find true sexual satisfaction. Then there are those who are bored and desire nothing very much. In analysis it becomes clear that presents signify to the child all the love-gifts which it has had to do without—its mother's milk and breast, its father's penis, urine, stool and babies. Presents also alleviate its sense of guilt by symbolizing the free gift of things which it has wanted to take by sadistic means. In its unconscious it regards not getting presents, like all other frustrations, as a punishment for the aggressive impulses that are bound up with its libidinal desires. In other cases, where the child is still more unfavourably situated in regard to its excessive sense of guilt or has failed to modify it, its fear of fresh disappointments will cause it to suppress its libidinal desires altogether so that the presents it does receive afford it no real pleasure.

The child who is unable to tolerate its early frustrations, for the reasons given above, will in its unconscious also regard every later frustration it receives in the course of its upbringing as a punishment, with the result that it becomes unmanageable and badly adapted to reality. In bigger children—and in some cases in little children too—this incapacity to tolerate frustrations is often covered over by a seeming adaptation, on account of their need to please the people about them. An apparent adaptation of this kind is liable, especially in the latency period, to conceal from view the presence of deeper-seated difficulties.

The attitude many children have towards festivals is also very characteristic. They look forward to Christmas Day,

Easter and so on with great impatience, only to be left completely unsatisfied by them when they are over. Days like these, and sometimes even Sundays, hold out the hope to a greater or lesser degree of a renewal, a 'fresh start', as it were, and, in connection with the presents that are expected, of a making good of all the bad things that they have suffered and done. Family occasions touch very deeply the complexes connected with the child's situation in home-life. A birthday, for instance, always represents re-birth, and other children's birthdays stimulate the conflicts connected with the birth of real or imaginary brothers and sisters. The way in which children react to occasions of this kind is therefore one of the tests of the presence of a neurosis in them.

Dislike of the theatre, cinema and shows of all kinds is intimately connected with disturbances of the child's epistemophilic instincts. The basis of this disturbance is, I have found, a repressed interest in the sexual life of its parents and in its own sexual life. This attitude, which brings about an inhibition of many sublimations, is ultimately due to anxiety and feelings of guilt belonging to a very early stage of development and arising from aggressive phantasies directed against sexual intercourse between the parents.

I should also like to emphasize the part played by psychological factors in the various physical illnesses to which children are liable. I have become convinced that many children mostly express their anxiety and sense of guilt by falling ill (in which case getting well has the effect of allaying anxiety) and that in general the frequent illnesses they go through at a certain age are partly brought on by neurosis. This psychogenetic element has the effect of increasing not only the child's liability to infection, but the severity and length of the illness itself.<sup>1</sup> In general, I have found that after analysis the child is much less liable

<sup>1</sup> In some cases of whooping-cough, for instance, in which analytic treatment was resumed after only a short interruption, I have found that the coughing fits increased in violence during the first week of analysis but rapidly decreased after that and that the illness ended much sooner than usual. In these cases every



to colds in especial. In some cases its susceptibility to them has been almost entirely removed.

We know that neurosis and character-formation are intimately connected and that in many analyses of adults extensive changes of character take place as well. Now whereas the analysis of older children nearly always effects favourable changes in character, early analysis, in removing a neurosis, brings about a far-reaching removal of educational difficulties. There thus seems to be a certain analogy between the small child's educational difficulties and what in the older child and the adult are known as characterological difficulties. It is a noteworthy fact that in talking of 'character' we think primarily of the individual himself even when his character has a disturbing influence on his environment, but that in talking of 'educational difficulties' we think first and foremost of the difficulties which the people in charge of the child have to contend with. In this way we often overlook the fact that these educational difficulties are the expression of significant processes of development which reach completion with the decline of the Oedipus complex. What come to our notice, among other things, as excessive educational difficulties in the child arise from the processes which have formed and still are forming its character and which underlie any later neurosis or defect of development from which it may suffer, so that they should more properly be regarded as characterological difficulties and as neurotic symptoms.

From what has been said above, then, we see that the difficulties which are never lacking in the development of a small child are neurotic in character. In other words, every child passes through a neurosis differing only in degree from one individual to another.<sup>1</sup> Since psycho-analysis

coughing fit, owing to its unconscious meaning, released severe anxiety, and this anxiety, again, considerably reinforced the stimulus to cough.

<sup>1</sup> This view, which I have maintained for a number of years now, has lately received valuable support. In his book, *Die Frage der Laienanalyse* (1926), Freud writes: 'Since we have learnt to see more clearly we are almost inclined to say that the occurrence of a neurosis in childhood is not the exception but the rule. It seems as though it is a thing that cannot be avoided in the course of development from the infantile disposition to the social life of the adult' (S. 61).

has been found to be the most efficacious means of removing the neuroses of adults, it seems logical to make use of psycho-analysis in combating the neuroses of children, and, moreover, seeing that every child goes through a neurosis, to apply it to all children. At present, owing to practical considerations, it is only possible to submit the neurotic difficulties of normal children to analytic treatment in rare instances. In describing indications for treatment, therefore, it is important to state what signs suggest the presence of a severe neurosis, a neurosis, that is, that places it beyond doubt that the child will suffer considerable difficulties in later years as well.

We shall not stop to discuss those infantile neuroses whose severity is unmistakable owing to the extent and character of the symptoms, but shall consider one or two cases in which, because insufficient attention has been paid to the specific indications of infantile neuroses, their true gravity has not been recognized. The reason why the neuroses of children have attracted so much less attention than the neuroses of adults is, I think, because in many respects their outward signs differ essentially from the symptoms of adults. Analysts have known, it is true, that beneath the neurosis of the adult there always lay an infantile neurosis, but for a long time they have failed to draw the only possible inference from this fact, namely, that neuroses must be, to say the least, extremely common among children—and this although the child itself puts before them evidence enough for such a view.

In judging what is neurotic in a child we cannot apply the standards proper to adults. It is by no means those children who approximate most nearly to non-neurotic adults who are the least neurotic themselves. Thus, for instance, a small child which fulfils all the requirements of its upbringing and does not let itself be dominated by its life of phantasy and instinct, which is, in fact, to all appearances completely adapted to reality and, moreover, shows little sign of anxiety—such a child would assuredly not only be a precocious being and quite devoid of charm, but



would be abnormal in the fullest sense of the word. If we complete this picture by supposing that its imaginative life has undergone the extensive repression which would be a necessary condition of such a development we should certainly have cause to regard its future with concern. The neurosis it suffers from would not be less in degree than the average, but merely without symptoms, and, as we know from the analysis of adults, a neurosis of this kind is usually a serious one.

Normally, we should expect to see clear traces of the severe struggles and crises through which the child passes in the first years of its life. These signs, however, differ in many ways from the symptoms of the neurotic adult. Up to a certain point the normal child brings to view its ambivalence and affects, its subjection to instinctual urges and phantasies and the influences proceeding from its super-ego; and it puts certain difficulties in the way of its adaptation to reality and therefore in the way of its upbringing and is by no means always an 'easy' child. But if its anxiety and ambivalence and the obstacles it presents to its adaptation to reality go beyond a certain limit, and the difficulties under which it suffers and which it makes its environment suffer are too great, then it ought to be called a decidedly neurotic child. Nevertheless, I still think that a neurosis of this type may often be less severe than a neurosis of the type in which the repression of affect has been so crushing and has set in so early that there is hardly any visible sign left of emotion or anxiety in the child. What actually differentiates the less neurotic from the more neurotic child is, besides the question of quantitative differences, the manner in which it deals with its difficulties.

The characteristic signs of an infantile neurosis, as described above, constitute a valuable point of departure for the study of the methods, often very obscure, by which the child has modified its anxiety and of the fundamental position which it has taken up. Thus, for example, it may be assumed that if a child does not like going to shows of any sort, such as the theatre or cinema, takes no pleasure in

asking questions and is inhibited in its play or can only play certain games with no imaginative content, it is suffering from severe inhibitions of its epistemophilic instinct and from an extensive repression of its imaginative life, although it may be otherwise well-adapted and seem to have no very marked troubles. Such a child will satisfy its desire for knowledge at a later age mostly in a very obsessional way and will often produce other neurotic disturbances in the same connection.

It has been said that in many children the original inability to tolerate frustration becomes obscured by an extensive adaptation to the requirements of their upbringing. They very early become 'good' and 'clever' children. But it is precisely these children who most commonly have that attitude of indifference to presents and treats, and so on, that has been mentioned above. If in addition to this attitude they show an extensive inhibition in playing and an excessive fixation to their objects, the probability of their succumbing to a neurosis in later years is very great. For children like these have adopted a pessimistic view of life and an attitude of renunciation to it. Their chief aim is to fight off their anxiety and feelings of guilt at all costs, even if it means giving up all happiness and all gratification of their instincts. At the same time they are more than ordinarily dependent upon their objects because they look to their external environment for protection and support against their own anxiety and sense of guilt.<sup>1</sup> More obvious, though not estimated at their true value either, are the difficulties presented by those children whose insatiable craving for presents goes along with an incapacity to tolerate the frustrations imposed on them by their upbringing.

It is fairly certain that in the typical cases here described the prospects of the child's achieving real stability of mind in the future are not favourable. As a rule, too, the general impression the child makes—its way of holding itself, its facial expression, its movements and speech—betrays an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. N. Searl, 'The Flight to Reality' (1929).



unsuccessful internal adaptation. In any case, analysis alone can show how severe the disturbances are. I have again and again emphasized the fact that the presence of a psychosis or of psychotic traits has often not been discovered in a child until it has been analysed for a considerable length of time. This is because the psychoses of children, like their neuroses, differ in many ways in their mode of expression from the psychoses of adults. In some children I have treated, whose neurosis already at an early age had the character of a severe obsessional neurosis in an adult, analysis showed that strong paranoid features were present.<sup>1</sup>

The question now to be considered is: how does a child show that it is fairly well adapted internally? It is a hopeful sign if it enjoys playing and gives free rein to its phantasy in doing so, being at the same time, as can be recognized from certain definite indications, well adapted to reality, and if it has really good—not over-affectionate—relations to its objects. Another good sign is if, together with this, it shows a relatively undisturbed development of its epistemophilic impulses, so that they flow freely in a number of different directions, without, on the other hand, having that character of compulsion and intensity which is typical of an obsessional neurosis. The emergence of a certain amount of affect and anxiety is also, I think, a pre-condition of a favourable development. These and other reasons for a favourable prognosis have in my experience, however, only a relative value and are no absolute guarantee of the future; for it often depends on the unforeseeable favourable or unfavourable external realities which the child encounters as it grows up whether its neurosis will reappear in later years or not.

Furthermore it seems to me that we do not know much about the mental structure of the normal individual or the difficulties that beset his unconscious, since he has been so much less the object of psycho-analytic investigation than the neurotic. Analytic experience of healthy children of various ages has convinced me that even though their ego

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the analyses of Erna (Chapter III.) and Egon (Chapter IV.).

reacts in a normal way they too have to face great quantities of anxiety, severe unconscious guilt and deep depression and that in some cases the only thing that distinguishes their difficulties from those of the neurotic child is that they are able to deal with them in a more confident and active manner. The result obtained by analytic treatment in these cases too seems to me to prove its value even for children who are only very slightly neurotic.<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that by diminishing their anxiety and sense of guilt and effecting fundamental changes in their sexual life analysis can exert a great influence not only on neurotic children but on normal ones as well.<sup>2</sup>

The next question to be considered is at what point the analysis of a child is to be regarded as completed. In adults we can tell this from various signs, such as that the patient has become capable of working and loving, of looking after himself in the circumstances in which he is placed and of making whatever decisions are necessary in the conduct of his life. If we know what the factors are which lead to failure in grown-up people and if we are alive to the presence of similar factors in children we possess a reliable guide in deciding whether an analysis has reached completion or not.

In adult life the individual may succumb to a neurosis, to characterological defects, to disturbances of his capacity for sublimation or to disorders of his sexual life. As regards neurosis, its presence at an early age can be detected, as I have endeavoured to show, by various slight but characteristic signs; and its cure at that age is the best prophylaxis against its appearance in later years. As regards characterological defects and difficulties, they, too, are best prevented by being eliminated in childhood. Concerning the third point, the play of children, which enables us to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the analyses of Willy (Chapter V.) and Inge (Chapter IV.).

<sup>2</sup> This assumption is also supported by the fact that in a number of cases I have had the child has successfully accomplished the transition to the stage of development next above the one it has been in, even including in some instances the critical transition to puberty and the transition from that period into adult life.



penetrate so deeply into their minds, gives us an idea of when their analysis has been completed in respect of their future capacity for sublimation. Before we can consider the analysis of a small child as completed, its inhibitions in playing must have been largely reduced.<sup>1</sup> When this has happened its interest in the play appropriate to its age will have become not only deeper and more stable but will also have been extended in various directions.

If, as a result of analysis, a child's obsessive interest in a single game becomes steadily enlarged until it covers many other forms of play, this process is equivalent to the expansion of interests and the increase of capacity for sublimation which is achieved in the analysis of an adult. In this way, by understanding the play of children we can estimate their capacity for sublimation in future years; and we can also tell when an analysis has sufficiently guarded against future inhibitions of their capacity to learn and to work.

Finally, the development of the child's interests in games, and the variations in quantity and kind which they show, enable us to gauge whether a good foundation has been laid for its sexual life in adult years. This may be illustrated by the analysis of two small children—a boy and a girl. Kurt, aged five, occupied himself at first, like most boys, with the toy motors and trains on my play-table. He picked them out from among the other toys and played some games with them. He compared their size and power, made them travel to a definite goal and expressed in this symbolic and, according to my experience, typical way, a comparison in respect of his penis, his potency and his personality as a whole with his father and brothers. It might have been assumed that these actions pointed to a normal and active heterosexual attitude in him. But his markedly apprehensive and unboyish nature gave quite a contrary impression;<sup>2</sup> and as the analysis proceeded the

<sup>1</sup> In older children inhibitions in learning and in active games must be similarly reduced.

<sup>2</sup> Kurt's passive attitude had been strengthened by the fact that he was the youngest by many years of a number of brothers. He was therefore in many

truth of this impression was confirmed. His games representing his rivalry with his father for the possession of his mother were very soon interrupted by the onset of severe anxiety. It appeared that he had developed a predominantly passive homosexual attitude but, owing to anxiety, could not maintain this attitude either and had therefore found refuge in megalomaniac phantasies. On this unrealistic basis he could thrust in the foreground and exaggerate both to himself and others a portion of the active and masculine tendencies which still remained alive in him.

I have often referred to the fact that children's play, like dreams, has a façade and that we can only discover its latent content by means of a thorough analysis, in the same way as we discover the latent content of dreams. But since play, owing to its closer relation to reality and its paramount position as a vehicle for the expression of phantasies, undergoes a stronger secondary elaboration, it is only very gradually, by observing the successive changes that take place in the games of children, that we can get to know the various currents of thought and feeling which flow beneath them.

We have seen that in Kurt the active masculine attitude which he exhibited in his first games in analysis was for the most part only a pretence and that it was soon broken off by the appearance of severe anxiety. This marked the beginning of the analysis of his passive homosexual attitude, but it was only after a considerable period of treatment (which occupied in all about 450 sessions) that the anxiety which opposed that attitude was to some degree reduced. When this had been accomplished the toy animals which had originally represented imaginary allies in his fight against his father emerged as children, and his passive feminine attitude and the desire for children which arose from it now found plainer expression.<sup>1</sup>

ways in the situation of an only child, and he suffered much from comparisons with his active elder brothers whose superiority was all the more oppressive from their habit of bringing it home to him.

<sup>1</sup> In my paper, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928), I have discussed the earliest foundation of the feminine position in the male child and have tried



Analysis of Kurt's fear of the 'mother with a penis' and of his excessive terror of his father<sup>1</sup> had the effect of increasing and once more bringing to the fore his active heterosexual position. He was able to give a more sustained expression in his play to his feelings of rivalry with his father. He once more took up the games he had played at the beginning of his analysis but this time he played them more steadily and imaginatively. He would, for instance, take great pains to build up the garages in which the motors were housed and was indefatigable in adding fresh items towards their perfection; or he would construct different kinds of villages and towns for the cars to make expeditions to—expeditions which symbolized his rivalry with his father for the possession of his mother. In the pleasure and care he took in making these villages, towns and garages he gave expression to his desire to restore his mother whom he had attacked in imagination. At the same time his attitude to his mother underwent a complete change in real life. As his anxiety and sense of guilt lessened and he became more capable of entertaining reactive tendencies, he began to have a much more affectionate attitude towards her.

The gradual strengthening of his heterosexual impulses was registered in numerous alterations that he made in his play. At first the separate details of it showed that here, too, his pregenital fixations still predominated or rather continually alternated with his genital fixations. For instance, the load which the train brought to the town or the van delivered at the house often symbolized excrements; and in that case it would be delivered at the back door. The fact that these games represented a violent kind of anal coitus with his mother appeared, among other

to show that his femininity complex undergoes a very early modification and becomes buried beneath the castration complex, to which it makes certain contributions. It is for this reason that the boy often very speedily relinquishes such games as playing with dolls, which correspond to his feminine components, and goes over to games which lay exaggerated emphasis on his masculinity.

<sup>1</sup> In this case also the aggressive feelings he had in regard to coitus between his parents proved to be the deepest motive force of his anxiety; and the 'woman with a penis' meant the mother who had incorporated his father's penis.

things, from the fact that in unloading, say, coal from a van, the garden or house would often be damaged, the people in the house get angry and his game soon be stopped by his own anxiety.

The conveying of loads of different kinds occupied, with its wealth of detail, the whole of one part of Kurt's analysis.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it would be vans fetching goods from the market or taking them there, sometimes people going on a long journey with all their possessions, in which case his further play-associations would show that what was being represented was a flight and that the articles were things that had been seized or stolen from his mother's body. The variations in minor points were most instructive. For instance, Kurt expressed the supremacy of his anal-sadistic phantasies by delivering his goods at the back entrance.<sup>2</sup> A little later on he did the same thing, but this time on the ground that he had to avoid the front entrance. From his associations to the front garden (the female genitals) it appeared that his fixation on the anus was reinforced by his dislike of the female genitals, a dislike that was based on a fear of them which had many determinants, one important one being a phantasy of meeting his father's penis while he was copulating with his mother.

This fear, which often has an inhibiting effect, can also act as a stimulus to the development of certain sexual phantasies. The boy's attempt to retain his heterosexual impulses, in spite of his fear of his father's penis and his flight from it, can also lead to peculiarities in his sexual life in adult years. A typical boy's phantasy of this kind—and one which Kurt brought out, too—is of copulating with his mother jointly with his father or in turns with him. In

<sup>1</sup> This is, incidentally, a typical game among children.

<sup>2</sup> In this description I have only selected one or two of the play phantasies involved in order to illustrate by their development the development of play phantasies in general. The material here brought forward was supported by a number of representations of various kinds. Thus, for example, the carts that carried goods to the town took a road which was shown by various details to have the significance of the anus.



this, combined genital and pregenital phantasies or predominantly genital ones alone may be engaged. In Kurt's games, for instance, two toy men or two carts would drive through one entrance of a building which represented his mother's body (another entrance being her anus). These two toy men would often agree to enter together or in turn; or else one of them would overpower or outwit the other. In this struggle the smaller man—Kurt himself—would gain the victory over the bigger one—his father—by turning himself into a giant. But soon after, a reaction of anxiety would set in and he would take flight in various ways, one of them being that he would use the other entrance, the back one, and give up the front one to the father figure. This example shows how the child's fear of castration impedes the establishment of his genital stage and strengthens his fixation, or rather regression, to pre-genital stages. But the immediate result is not always a regression to the pregenital stage. If the child's anxiety is not too strong he can have recourse to many kinds of phantasies belonging to the genital level besides the ones that have been mentioned here.

What, as a child, the individual shows us in these play phantasies will emerge in him in manhood as a necessary condition of his love life. Kurt's phantasies of the two toy men entering a building from different sides or using the same side, either together or alternately, either after a fight or by agreement, display the various ways in which an individual will actually behave in a 'triangular' situation in which he is the third party. In such a situation he may, for instance, take the line of the 'injured third party' or of the family friend who outwits the husband or fights him, and so on. Another effect of anxiety, on the other hand, may be to diminish the frequency of games of this sort representing coitus, and this effect will come out in later life in the diminished or disturbed potency of the individual in question. To what extent he will be able to live out the sexual phantasies of his childhood in later life will depend on other factors in his development as well,

in especial his experiences in reality. But fundamentally, the conditions under which he can love are foreshadowed in every particular in the play phantasies of his early years.

These phantasies, by the way in which they evolve, show that as the child's sexual impulses advance to the genital level his capacity for sublimation develops too, and that sublimation and sexuality are interlinked. Kurt, for instance, made a house that was to be all his own. The house was his mother of whom he wanted to have sole possession. At the same time he could never do enough in the way of planning his house well and making it beautiful.

Play phantasies of this kind already outline the detachment from his love-objects that the child will effect later on. A small patient of mine used to represent his mother's body by means of maps. At first he wanted to have larger and larger sheets of paper so as to make the maps as large as possible; then, after his game had been interrupted by an anxiety-reaction, he began to do the opposite and make very small maps. His attempt to depict by the smallness of the things he drew a dissimilarity and detachment from his original large object—his mother—failed, and his maps got bigger and bigger again until at last they reached their original size and he was once more interrupted in his drawing by anxiety. He brought out the same idea in the paper dolls which he cut out. The small doll, which he always ended by discarding in favour of a larger one, turned out to be a small girl friend of his whom he was trying to make his love-object instead of his mother. Thus we see that even the individual's capacity for libidinal detachment from his objects at puberty has its roots in early years and that analysis of the small child is of great assistance in facilitating this process.

As his analysis goes forward the boy becomes increasingly able to carry out in games and sublimations the heterosexual phantasies in which he dares to fight his father for the possession of his mother. His pregenital fixations diminish and the struggle itself changes greatly in character. His sadism decreases, so that his part in the fight is



less arduous since it arouses less anxiety and guilt in him. Thus his increased ability to carry out his phantasies in games calmly and uninterruptedly and to introduce the element of reality into them more satisfactorily is an indication that he possesses the foundations of sexual potency in later life. These changes in the character of his phantasies and games are always accompanied by other important changes in his whole personality and make him more free and active in his behaviour, as is seen from the removal of numerous inhibitions in him and from his changed attitude both to his immediate and his more distant environment.

Let us now turn to our second illustration of the way in which play phantasies throw light upon a child's later sexual life. Rita, aged two and three-quarters, was severely inhibited in play. The only thing she would do—and that only very unwillingly and with obvious inhibitions—was to play with her dolls and toy animals. Even this occupation was more like an obsessional symptom, for it consisted almost entirely in washing her dolls and continually changing their clothes in a compulsive way. As soon as she introduced any imaginative element into these activities, that is, as soon as she began to play in any sense of the word, she had an immediate outbreak of anxiety and stopped the game.<sup>1</sup> Analysis showed that her feminine and maternal attitude was very poorly developed. In her play with her doll she only to a very slight degree played the part of mother. Her relation to it was mainly one of identification. In this identification her own acute fear of being dirty or destroyed inside or wicked urged her to keep on cleaning her doll and changing its clothes. Only after her castration complex had been in part analysed did it transpire that her obsessional play with her doll at the very beginning of the analysis had already given expression to her deepest anxiety, namely, her fear that her mother would take her children away from her.

<sup>1</sup> In Chapters I. and II. I have referred in another connection to the deeper causes of Rita's anxiety and the repression of her phantasies.

At the time when her castration complex was in the foreground, Rita made a toy bear represent the penis which she had stolen from her father<sup>1</sup> and with the help of which she wanted to supplant her father in the possession of her mother's love. In this part of her analysis she would have anxiety in connection with masculine phantasies of this kind. It was not until her deeper-lying anxiety belonging to the feminine and maternal attitude had been analysed that her attitude really changed and she showed a genuinely maternal attitude towards her bear and her doll. While she was kissing the bear and hugging it and calling it pet names Rita once said: 'Now I'm not a bit unhappy<sup>2</sup> any more because I've got such a dear little child after all'. That she had now attained the stage in which genital tendencies, heterosexual impulses and a maternal attitude were paramount was obvious from many indications, among others from her changed behaviour towards her objects. Her aversion to her father, which had before been so marked, gave place to affection for him.<sup>3</sup>

The reason why we can foretell from the character and development of play phantasies in children what their sexual life will be in later years is because the whole of their play and sublimations is based on masturbation phantasies. If, as I think, their games are a means of expressing their masturbation phantasies and finding an outlet for them, it follows that the character of their play phantasies will indicate the character of their sexual life in adult years;<sup>4</sup> and it also follows that child analysis is able

<sup>1</sup> Rita used to pretend that she had got rid of the guard of the train and that she was now travelling with the bear to the house of a 'good' woman where she would be well looked after. But the guard came back and threatened her. This showed that her fear of her father, whose penis (the bear) she had stolen, prevented her from maintaining her identification with him.

<sup>2</sup> Rita suffered from periods of severe depression during which she sometimes brought to light quite extraordinarily strong feelings of guilt, and at others sat by herself and cried. When asked why she was crying she would answer: 'Because I'm so unhappy'; and when asked why she was unhappy she would answer: 'Because I'm crying'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chapter II.

<sup>4</sup> In his course of lectures, 'On the Technique of Psycho-Analysis', delivered in Berlin in 1923, Hanns Sachs mentioned the evolution of masturbation phan-



not only to bring about a greater stability and capacity for sublimation in childhood but to ensure mental well-being and prospects of happiness in maturity.

ties from the anal-sadistic to the genital stage as one of the criteria which, in the analysis of an obsessional case, indicate that the treatment has been completed.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SEXUAL ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN

ONE of the important achievements of psycho-analysis is the discovery that children possess a sexual life which finds utterance both in direct sexual activities and in sexual phantasies.

We know that masturbation occurs in general in the sucking stage and that it is very commonly prolonged, in a greater or less measure, right up to the latency period. (I need hardly say that we do not expect to find children, even small ones, masturbating openly.) In the period before puberty and particularly during puberty itself, masturbation becomes very frequent again. The period in which the child's sexual activities are least pronounced is the latency period. This is because the decline of the Oedipus complex is accompanied by a diminution in the force of instinctual trends. On the other hand, there is the still unexplained fact that it is at that very period that the child's struggle against masturbation is at its height. In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), Freud says (S. 55) that during the latency period the energies of the child seem to be mainly taken up with the task of resisting the temptation to masturbate. His statement seems to support the view that even during the latency period the pressure of the id has not diminished to the extent commonly supposed, or else that the force exerted by the child's sense of guilt against its id-tendencies has increased.

In my opinion, the excessive sense of guilt which masturbatory activities arouse in children is really aimed at



the destructive tendencies residing in the phantasies that accompany masturbation.<sup>1</sup> It is this sense of guilt which urges children to stop masturbating altogether and which, if it has been successful in doing so, often leads them on to a phobia of touching. That a fear of this kind is as important an indication of a disturbance in development as obsessive masturbation is perfectly evident from analyses of adults, where we see how the patient's fear of masturbation often leads to grave disorders of his sexual life. Disturbances of this kind cannot, of course, actually be seen in the child, since they only emerge in later life in the form of impotence or frigidity according to the sex of the individual; but their existence can be inferred from the presence of certain other difficulties which are invariable concomitants of a faulty sexual development.

Analyses of touching-phobias show that a too complete suppression of masturbation not only results in the appearance of all kinds of symptoms, such as tic,<sup>2</sup> but, by causing an excessive repression of masturbation phantasies, puts a grave obstacle in the way of the latency period in respect of the formation of sublimations—a function which is of paramount importance from the cultural point of view.<sup>3</sup> For masturbation phantasies are not only the basis of all the child's play activities but a constituent of all its later sublimations. When these repressed phantasies are set free in analysis the small child can be seen to begin to play and the older one to learn and to develop sublimations and interests of every kind; while at the same time, if it has been suffering from a phobia of touching, it will start masturbating again. Conversely, in cases of obsessive masturbation the curing of that compulsion<sup>4</sup> will go hand in hand, among other things, with a greater

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ferenczi, 'Psycho-Analytical Observations on Tic' (1919).

<sup>3</sup> In my paper, 'Zur Genese des Tic' (1925), I have described a case of tic during the analysis of which the patient at one and the same time gradually became freed of his symptom, resumed his long-forbidden practice of masturbation, and built up a number of sublimations.

<sup>4</sup> It nearly always happens that analysis of touching-phobias leads the patient through a temporary phase of obsessive masturbation, and *vice versa*. Another

capacity for sublimation. In this case, however, as has been shown in detail elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the child will continue to masturbate, though in a more moderate degree and not obsessively. Thus, as regards capacity for sublimation and masturbatory activity, analysis of obsessive masturbation and analysis of phobias of touching lead to the same result.

It would seem, then, that the decline of the Oedipus conflict normally ushers in a period in which the child's sexual desires are diminished though by no means entirely lost; and that a moderate amount of masturbation of a non-obsessive kind is a normal occurrence in every stage of its life.

The factors underlying obsessive masturbation are operative in yet another form of infantile sexual activity. As I have repeatedly said, in my experience it is the regular thing for quite young children to enter into sexual relations with one another. Moreover, analyses of children in the latency and puberty period have shown that mutual activities of this kind have been prolonged into and beyond the latency period or have been sporadically resumed during that time. The same factors were found to be operative in the main in every instance. The following two cases, in which I was able to analyse both partners in the relationship, will illustrate a situation of this kind.

The first case concerns two brothers, Franz and Günther, aged five and six respectively. They had been brought up in poor but not unfavourable family circumstances. Their parents got on well together; and although the mother had to do all the housework herself she took an active and enlightened interest in her sons. She sent Günther to be analysed on account of his unusually inhibited and timid character and his obvious want of contact with reality. He was a secretive and extremely distrustful child,

factor in obsessive masturbation is the patient's desire, based on his sense of guilt, to display his habit to the people about him. This also holds good for children of every age who masturbate openly and to all appearance in an uninhibited manner.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter III.



apparently debarred from any genuine feelings of affection. Franz, on the other hand, was aggressive, over-excitable and difficult to manage. The brothers got on very badly together, but on the whole Günther seemed to give way to his younger brother.<sup>1</sup> Analysis was able to trace back their mutual sexual acts as far as the ages of about three and a half and two and a half respectively,<sup>2</sup> but it is quite probable that they had begun even earlier. It appeared that whereas neither had any conscious sense of guilt whatever about these acts (though careful to conceal them), both suffered from a very heavy one in the unconscious. To the elder brother, who had seduced the younger and sometimes forced him to perform them, the acts—which comprised *fellatio*, mutual masturbation and touching the anus with the fingers—were equivalent to castrating his brother (*fellatio* meant biting off his penis) and totally destroying his whole body by cutting and tearing him to pieces, poisoning or burning him, and so on. An analysis of the phantasies accompanying the acts showed that they not only represented destructive onslaughts upon his younger brother but that the latter stood for Günther's father and mother joined in sexual intercourse. Thus his behaviour was in a sense an actual enactment, though in a mitigated form, of his sadistic masturbatory phantasies against his parents.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in doing these things, sometimes by force, to his younger brother, he was trying to assure himself that he would come out best

<sup>1</sup> Analysis revealed the presence of strong psychotic traits in both boys. But we are solely concerned here with the analysis of their sexual relations.

<sup>2</sup> At that time their mother had noticed one or two occurrences of this kind.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928). In their total lack of any reaction-formations as well as in many other respects, these phantasies resembled the actions of criminals of a sadistic type. Günther felt no remorse or sorrow, but only fear of retaliation. But this fear was a constant incentive to him to repeat his sexual activities. Owing to the extremely abnormal character of the elder boy, in whom the destructive instincts so greatly predominated over the libidinal ones that his sexual behaviour had the value of criminal actions (and we must not forget that among adult criminals perverse sexual acts often go along with criminal ones), his fear of retaliation, as we have seen, urged him to put his object out of the way. Every time Günther did violence to his brother he received assurance that he himself was not the victim.

in his dangerous fight with his father and with his mother too. His overwhelming fear of his parents increased his impulse to destroy them; and his consequent imaginary attacks on them added to that fear.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, his fear that his brother might betray him intensified his hatred of him and his desire to kill him by means of his practices with him.

Accordingly the sexual life of this boy, in whom an enormous amount of sadism was present, was almost entirely lacking in positive elements. In his mind the various sexual procedures he undertook were nothing but a series of cruel and subtle tortures, designed in the end to put his object to death. His relations with his brother were continually arousing his anxiety along these lines, and went to increase those difficulties which had led to a completely abnormal psycho-sexual development in him.

As to the younger brother, Franz, his unconscious had completely fathomed the unconscious meaning of the practices, and accordingly his terror of being castrated and killed by his elder brother had been heightened to an exaggerated degree. Yet he had never complained to anyone nor in any way allowed their relations to transpire. He reacted to these activities which terrified him so much with a severe masochistic fixation and with a sense of guilt although he was the one who had been seduced. The following are some of the reasons for this attitude:

In his sadistic phantasies Franz identified himself with the brother who was doing him violence, and in this way obtained gratification of his sadistic tendencies, such tendencies being, as we know, one of the sources of masochism. But in thus identifying himself with the object of his fear he was also attempting to master his anxiety. In imagination he was now the assailant and the enemy he was overpowering was his id<sup>2</sup> and also his brother's penis, internalized in himself, which represented his father's penis—his dangerous super-ego—and which he viewed as a perse-

<sup>1</sup> In his book, *Der Schrecken* (1929), Reik has pointed out that anxiety increases feelings of hatred.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929), in which these mechanisms are discussed at greater length.



cutor. This internal persecutor would be destroyed by the attacks that were being made on his own body.<sup>1</sup>

But since the boy could not maintain this alliance with a cruel external super-ego against his id and his internalized objects, because it constituted too great a menace to his ego, his hatred was continually being diverted to his external objects—which represented his own feeble and hated ego as well—so that he would, for instance, sometimes be brutal to children younger and weaker than himself. These displacements accounted for the hatred and rage which he showed at times during his analytic hour. He would, for instance, threaten me with a wooden spoon, wanting to push it into my mouth and calling me small, stupid and weak. The spoon symbolized his brother's penis being forcibly thrust into his own mouth. He had identified himself with his brother and thus turned his hatred of him against his own self. And he had passed on his rage against himself for being small and weak to other children less strong than him, and, incidentally, to me in the transference-situation. Alternately with the employment of this mechanism, he used in imagination to reverse his relations with his elder brother so that he would view Günther's attacks on him as something that he, Franz, was doing to Günther. But since for him, too, his brother also had the significance of his parents in his sadistic phantasies, he was put in the position of being his brother's accomplice in a joint attack on them, and consequently shared Günther's unconscious sense of guilt and fear of being found out by them. He had thus, like his brother, a strong unconscious motive for keeping the whole relationship secret.

A number of observations of this kind have led me to the conclusion that it is the excessive pressure exerted by the super-ego which not only causes the complete sup-

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter XI. we shall go more fully into this particular mechanism, which seems to me a fundamental one in the formation of feminine masochism. In her paper, 'Psychotic Mechanisms in Cultural Development' (1930), Melitta Schmideberg has pointed out that among primitive people the practice of expulsion of disease by violence aims at overcoming the patient's fear of the demon within him (his father's introjected penis).

pression of sexual activities, as we already know, but which actually arouses the compulsion to indulge in such activities—that is to say, that anxiety and a sense of guilt reinforce libidinal fixations and heighten libidinal desires.<sup>1</sup> As far as I can see, an excessive sense of guilt and too great anxiety act in the direction of preventing the child's instinctual needs from diminishing when the latency period sets in. And we must not forget that in that period even a much lessened sexual activity calls forth excessive reactions of guilt. The structure and dimensions of the child's neurosis will determine how the struggle in the latency period will fall out. As the final upshot a phobia of touching on the one hand and obsessive masturbation on the other are the two extremes of a complementary series that presents an almost infinite number of possible gradations and variations.

In the case of Günther and Franz it became clear that their compulsion to have sexual intercourse with one another was determined by a factor which would seem to be of general significance for the repetition-compulsion. When his anxiety concerns an unreal danger directed towards the inside of his body, the individual is impelled to turn that danger into a real and external one. (In the present instance Franz's fear of his brother's internalized penis as a persecutor and his fear of his 'bad' internalized parents urged him to let himself be assaulted by his brother.) He will continually be bringing about an external danger-situation of this kind in a compulsive way since the anxiety it arouses in him, however great it may be, is nevertheless not so great as the anxiety he feels about the inside of his body and can in any case be better dealt with.<sup>2</sup>

As it happened, it would have been impossible to put a

<sup>1</sup> On this point, which is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter VIII., I find myself in agreement with Reik, who, in his 'Libido und Schuldgefühl' (1929), has pointed out that in certain instances activation of the sense of guilt can bring about a strengthening of the libido and an enlargement of instinctual gratification, and that in these cases an increase of anxiety coming from a bad conscience can actually produce instinctual gratification.

<sup>2</sup> M. N. Searl has pointed out the mechanism of flight into reality in her paper, 'The Flight to Reality' (1929).



stop to the brothers' sexual relations by external measures, since their home was not big enough for each to have a bedroom of his own. And even if such a measure had been practicable it would have failed, I think, especially in a case like this where the compulsion on both sides was so strong. Left alone together for only a few minutes in the day, they would often find time to start some kind of mutual sexual touching which had the same significance for their unconscious as the complete performance of their various sadistically imagined acts. It was only after a long analysis of both boys, during which I never once tried to influence them to give up their practices<sup>1</sup> but confined myself to bringing to light the determining cause of their sexual relations to each other in a purely analytic way, that their sexual activities gradually began to change, becoming at first less compulsive in character and finally ceasing altogether—not because the two had grown indifferent about them, but because now that their sense of guilt was less acute and less insusceptible to modification it became the very factor which urged them to renounce those practices; so that, whereas too much anxiety and a sense of guilt originating in an early stage of development had been responsible for their compulsion by reinforcing their fixation, a decreased sense of guilt operating in a different way enabled them to give up those relations. Hand in hand with the gradual alteration and cessation of their sexual practices their personal attitude towards each other underwent a considerable change. From having been visibly ill-disposed and hostile they began to entertain a quite normal relation of friendship and goodwill towards each other.

Coming to the second case, we find that it exhibits the

<sup>1</sup> I may remark that in this particular case, where the evil consequences of the boys' relations were so striking, I did not find it at all easy to keep to my absolute rule of abstaining from any interference of that kind. And yet it was precisely this case which brought me most convincing proof of the uselessness of any educational measures on the part of the analyst. Even if I had been able to stop their practices—which I was not—I should have done nothing towards the essential business of removing the underlying determinants of the situation and thus giving a new direction to the whole course of their hitherto faulty development.

same deep-seated causes as the one we have just described, although, of course, it differs in certain details. A short account of it will therefore suffice. Ilse, aged twelve, and Gert, aged thirteen and a half, used to indulge from time to time in coitus-like acts which happened quite suddenly, and often after long intervals. The girl showed no conscious sense of guilt about them but the boy, who was much more normal, did. Their analysis showed that they had had sexual relations with each other from earliest childhood and had only temporarily broken them off at the beginning of the latency period; for both suffered from an overpowering sense of guilt which obliged them to repeat their acts from time to time in a compulsive manner. These acts had nevertheless not only become more rare in their incidence but more limited in their scope during that period.<sup>1</sup> The children had given up *fellatio* and *cunnilingus* and for some time had not gone beyond touching and inspecting each other's genitals. During pre-puberty, however, they began having coitus-like contact once more. It was the brother who initiated these acts and they were compulsive in character. He used to do them on a sudden impulse and never thought about them before or after. He even used to 'forget' the event altogether in between whiles. He had a partial amnesia of this kind for a number of things connected with these sexual relations, especially in regard to his early childhood. As far as the girl was concerned, she had often been the active partner in early childhood but later on she had only played a passive rôle.

As its profounder causes began to emerge under analysis the compulsive behaviour of brother and sister gradually

<sup>1</sup> In other instances, too, in which intercourse of this kind has been prolonged into the latency period, it has been the writer's experience that only a portion of the original acts is continued (*fellatio* and *cunnilingus* being most often given up) and that even that remnant is performed more seldom—usually only quite occasionally. Nevertheless, it carries with it, as far as the child's unconscious sense of guilt goes, the complete psychological content of the original sexual relations and all the acts performed at that time. For instance, after an attempt to have coitus with her brother, Ilse developed a rash round her mouth. This rash was an expression of her sense of guilt about *fellatio*, which she used to practise as a small child together with other sexual acts, but which she had given up since early childhood.



cleared away, until in the end the sexual relation between them stopped entirely, as it had in the case of Franz and Günther. And similarly their personal relations, which had been very unsatisfactory before, showed a remarkable improvement.

In the analysis of these two cases and others like them we find that step by step with the recession of the compulsive character of the acts a number of important and interconnected changes take place. The decrease of the child's sense of guilt is accompanied by a decrease of sadism and a stronger emergence of the genital phase; and these changes are evinced in corresponding changes in its masturbation phantasies and, if it is still quite young, in the phantasies it introduces into its play.

In analyses of children at the age of puberty we find a further and quite special alteration taking place in their masturbation phantasies. For instance, Gert had at first no conscious masturbation phantasies at all; but in the course of his treatment he began to have one about a naked girl whose headless body alone was visible. At a later stage the head began to appear and grew more and more distinct till at last it became recognizable as that of his sister. By the time this happened, however, his compulsion was already gone and his sexual relations with his sister had quite stopped. This shows the connection there was between the excessive repression of his desires and phantasies in regard to his sister and his obsessive impulse to have sexual relations with her. Later on still his phantasies underwent a further change and he saw other, unknown girls, in his imagination. Finally he had phantasies about one in especial, a friend of his sister's. This gradual alteration registered the process of libidinal detachment from his sister that was going on—a process which could not take place until his compulsive fixation on her, maintained by his excessive sense of guilt, had been removed in the course of analysis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gert came to me on account of certain neurotic difficulties of a not very severe kind. His analysis lasted one year. Three years later I heard that he was going on well.

In general, as regards the existence of sexual relations between children, especially between brothers and sisters, I may say on the basis of my observations that they are the rule in early childhood but are only prolonged into the latency period and puberty if the child's sense of guilt is excessive and has not been successfully modified.<sup>1</sup> As far as we can judge, the effect of the sense of guilt during the latency period is to allow the child to continue to masturbate, though in a lesser degree than before, but at the same time to make it give up its sexual activities with other children, whether its own brothers and sisters or not, as being too realistic an enactment of its incestuous and sadistic desires. During puberty the movement away from such relations is continued, in conformity with the aims of that period which involve a detachment of the libido from incestuous objects. But at a later stage of puberty the individual will, under normal circumstances, enter into sexual relations with new objects—a relationship based on his progressive libidinal detachment from the old objects and sustained by different, contra-incestuous currents of feeling.

We must now consider how far relations of this kind can be prevented from occurring in the first instance. It seems highly doubtful whether it is possible to do this without causing a good deal of harm in other ways, since, for instance, the children would have to be kept under regular surveillance and would suffer a serious curtailment of liberty; and whether in any case, however strictly they were watched, it could be done at all. Furthermore, although early experiences like these can do a lot of mischief in some cases, in others their effect upon the child's general development can be a favourable one. For besides gratifying the child's libido and his desire for sexual knowledge, relations of this kind serve the important function of diminishing his excessive sense of guilt, and for this reason: the phantasies the child

<sup>1</sup> In any case I think that such relations are much more frequent even during latency and puberty than is usually supposed.



introduces into these relations are based, as we know, upon sadistic masturbation phantasies round which are centred his most intense feelings of guilt; therefore the knowledge that his forbidden phantasies against his parents are shared by another gives him the feeling of having an accomplice and this greatly lightens the burden of his anxiety.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand a relation of this kind gives rise to anxiety and a sense of guilt on its own account. Whether its effect will ultimately be good or bad—whether it will protect the child from anxiety or increase it—seems to depend upon the quantity of sadism present in him and more especially upon the attitude of his partner. From my knowledge of a number of cases, I should say that where the positive and libidinal factors predominate, such a relationship has a favourable influence upon the child's object relations and capacity for love;<sup>2</sup> but where, as with Günther and Franz, destructive impulses, on one side at any rate, and acts of coercion dominate it, it is able to impair the whole development of the child in the gravest way.

In the matter of the sexual activities of children, psycho-analytic knowledge, while showing us the full import of certain developmental factors, has once again not yet enabled us to suggest any really reliable measures of a prophylactic kind. Let me quote a passage from Freud:<sup>3</sup>

‘This state of things has a certain interest for those looking to pedagogy for the prevention of neuroses by early intervention in the matter of the child's sexual development. As long as attention is mainly directed to the infantile sexual experiences one would think everything in the way of prophylaxis of later neurosis could be done by ensuring that this development should be retarded and the child secured against this kind of experience. But we know that the conditions causing neurosis are more complicated than this and that they cannot be influenced in a general

<sup>1</sup> In his book, *Gemeinsame Tagträume* (1924), Hanns Sachs remarks upon the fact that when incestuous phantasies or day-dreams are shared the sense of guilt is lessened.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapters XI. and XII. for a fuller consideration of these factors.

<sup>3</sup> *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1918), p. 305.

way by attending to one factor only. Strict supervision in childhood loses value because it is helpless against the constitutional factor; more than this, it is less easy to carry out than specialists in education imagine; and it entails two new risks which are not to be lightly disregarded. It may accomplish too much, in that it favours an exaggerated degree of sexual repression which is harmful in its effects, and it sends the child into life without power to resist the urgent demands of his sexuality that must be expected at puberty. It therefore remains most doubtful how far prophylaxis in childhood can go with advantage, and whether a changed attitude to actuality would not constitute a better point of departure for attempts to forestall the neuroses.'



PART II

EARLY ANXIETY-SITUATIONS AND  
THEIR EFFECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE CHILD





## CHAPTER VIII

### EARLY STAGES OF THE OEDIPUS CONFLICT AND OF SUPER-EGO FORMATION

**I**N the following chapters I shall attempt to add something to our knowledge of the origin and structure of the super-ego. The theoretical conclusions I am going to put forward have been obtained from a direct acquaintance with the earliest processes of mental development, since they are based on actual analyses of small children. These analyses have shown that the oral frustrations which children undergo release the Oedipus impulses in them and that the super-ego begins to be formed at the same time. The genital impulses remain out of sight at first since they do not as a rule assert themselves against the pre-genital impulses until the third year of life. At that period they begin to emerge into clear view and the child enters a phase in which its early sexual life comes to a climax and its Oedipus conflict attains full development.

In the following pages I shall outline the developmental processes which precede this early expansion of sexuality and try to show that the early stages of the Oedipus conflict and of the formation of the super-ego extend, roughly, from the middle of the first year to the third year of the child's life.<sup>1</sup>

Normally the infant's pleasure in sucking is succeeded by pleasure in biting. Lack of gratification at the oral-sucking stage increases its need for gratification at the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

oral-biting stage.<sup>1</sup> Abraham's opinion that the child's inability to get sufficient pleasure in its sucking period depends on the circumstances under which it is fed is completely borne out by general analytic observation. We also know that the illnesses and developmental deficiencies of children are partly due to the same cause. Nevertheless, unfavourable conditions of nutrition, which we may regard as external frustrations, are not, it seems, the only reason why the child gets too little pleasure at the sucking stage. This is seen from the fact that some children are incapable of obtaining enjoyment from sucking—are 'bad feeders'—although they receive sufficient nourishment. Their inability to obtain gratification from sucking is, I think, the consequence of an internal frustration and is derived, as far as my experience goes, from an abnormally increased oral sadism.<sup>2</sup> It would seem that the polarity between the life-instincts and the death-instincts is already coming out in these phenomena of early infancy, for we may regard the force of the child's fixation at the oral-sucking level as an expression of the force of its libido, and, similarly, the early and powerful emergence of its oral sadism as a sign of the ascendancy of its destructive instinctual components.

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Oral Erotism and Character' (1921) Abraham has pointed out that excess of gratification as well as want of it in the sucking period can lead to a specially strong fixation on pleasure in biting. In his 'Notes on Oral Character-Formation' (1925) Edward Glover lays special stress on the importance of oral frustration for a fixation of this kind, since he believes that whenever an excess of oral gratification leads to traumatic consequences other factors are at work as well. In my view, too, the results are essentially different in the two cases.

<sup>2</sup> Erna (Chapter III.) was a case in point. She had repeatedly injured her mother's breast by biting when she was still quite small and long before she had grown her teeth. She had also been a bad feeder in infancy. I have come across other instances, too, of abnormally strong oral sadism in which the sucking period had brought with it no outward disturbance or difficulty but had in reality been completely unsatisfactory for the child. Again, we get cases in which serious external disturbances in that period have led, not to an abnormally intense oral sadism, but to a strong fixation at the oral-sucking stage. Thus Ruth (Chapter II.), who had a strong oral-sucking fixation of this kind, had gone hungry for months as an infant because her mother had too little milk. Another patient, who had never had the breast at all but had been bottle-fed, showed a strong oral sadism, it is true, but he also had a strong fixation at the oral-sucking stage.



As Abraham<sup>1</sup> and Ophuijsen have pointed out, a reinforcement from constitutional sources of the zones which are involved in biting, such as the muscles of the jaw, is a fundamental factor in the infant's fixation at the oral-sadistic level. The most serious deficiencies of development and psychic illnesses result where external frustrations—*i.e.* unfavourable conditions of nourishment—coincide with a constitutionally strengthened oral sadism which impairs the infant's pleasure in sucking. On the other hand, an oral sadism which sets in neither too soon nor too violently (and this implies that the sucking stage has run its course satisfactorily) seems to be a necessary condition for the normal development of the child.<sup>2</sup>

If this is the case, temporal factors will take on a new importance side by side with quantitative ones. If the child's oral-sadistic tendencies are heightened too early and violently, its relations to its objects and the formation of its character will fall too much under the sway of its sadism and ambivalence,<sup>3</sup> and its ego will develop in advance of its libido—this being, as we know, a factor in the production of obsessional neurosis<sup>4</sup>—because the anxiety arising from such an abrupt increase of its oral sadism will exert great pressure on its as yet immature ego.

Concerning the origin of anxiety, Freud has broadened his original conception and now only gives a very limited application to the hypothesis that anxiety arises from a direct conversion of libido. He shows that when the sucking infant is hungry it feels anxiety as a result of an increase of tension caused by its need, but that this early anxiety-situation has an earlier prototype. He says: 'The situation of being unsatisfied, in which the amount of excitation reaches a painful degree . . . must be analogous

<sup>1</sup> Abraham, 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924), p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> Another developmental factor of basic importance is, I have found, the greater or lesser capacity of the immature ego to tolerate anxiety. This factor will be discussed later on.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'The Influence of Oral Erotism on Character-Formation' (1924); also Edward Glover, 'The Significance of the Mouth in Psycho-Analysis' (1924).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Freud, 'The Predisposition to Obsessional Neurosis' (1913).

for the suckling to its experience of birth and must therefore be a repetition of that danger-situation. Both situations have in common the economic disturbance brought about by the accumulation of stimuli which require to be discharged. It is this factor, therefore, which is the true core of the "danger", and in both situations a reaction of anxiety sets in. . . .<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, he has difficulty in reconciling the fact that 'the anxiety belonging to phobias is an ego-anxiety—*i.e.* arises in the ego—and does not emanate from repression but is itself the cause of repression'<sup>2</sup> with his first statement that in certain cases anxiety arises from a tension of libido. The supposition that 'in such situations as disturbance during coitus, interrupted excitement or abstinence, the ego senses dangers and reacts to them with anxiety'<sup>3</sup> does not to his mind offer a satisfactory solution of the problem; and in a later passage he returns from the discussion of other points to consider the problem once more, and refers the emergence of anxiety 'to that danger-situation in which, as at birth, . . . the ego finds itself helpless in the face of growing instinctual demands, *i.e.* that situation which is the first and original condition for the appearance of anxiety'.<sup>4</sup> He defines as the nucleus of the danger-situation 'the admission of our helplessness against it—a physical helplessness if the danger belongs to reality and a psychological one if it comes from the instincts'.<sup>5</sup>

The clearest instance of conversion of unsatisfied libido into anxiety is, I think, the reaction of the suckling to tensions caused by its physical needs. Such a reaction, however, is without doubt not only one of anxiety but of rage as well.<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to say at what time this fusion of the destructive and libidinal instincts occurs. There is

<sup>1</sup> *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* S. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* S. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* S. 86.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* S. 109.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ferenczi, 'The Problem of the Acceptance of Unpleasant Ideas' (1926). In his paper, 'The Problem of Melancholia' (1928), Radó has pointed out the importance of rage in the reaction of the suckling to hunger, but the inferences he has drawn from it are different from those I shall put forward in the following pages.



a good deal of evidence for the view that it has existed all along and that the tension caused by need merely serves to strengthen the sadistic instincts of the infant. We know, however, that the destructive instinct is directed against the organism itself and must therefore be regarded by the ego as a danger. In my view it is this danger which is felt by the individual as anxiety.<sup>1</sup> Thus anxiety would spring from aggression.<sup>2</sup> But since, as we know, libidinal frustration heightens the sadistic instincts, ungratified libido would, indirectly, liberate anxiety or increase it. On this theory Freud's suggestion that the ego senses a danger in abstinence would be a solution of the problem after all. My only contention is that it is the destructive instincts which give rise to that danger which he calls 'psychological helplessness in face of instinctual danger'.

Freud tells us that the narcissistic libido of the organism deflects the death-instinct outwards in order to prevent it from destroying the organism itself, and that this process is at the bottom of the individual's relations to his objects and underlies the mechanism of projection. He goes on to say: 'Another portion' (of the death-instinct) 'is not included in this displacement outwards; it remains within the organism and is "bound" there libidinally with the help of the accompanying sexual excitation mentioned above. This portion we must recognize as the original erotogenic masochism.'<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that the ego has

<sup>1</sup> In *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), Freud considers that in some cases a certain amount of instinctual anxiety which has become released from the destructive instinct may enter into reality anxiety. His actual words are: 'It may often enough happen that in a situation which the individual is right in regarding as one of danger a portion of his instinctual anxiety may become joined to his reality anxiety. The instinctual demand of which he is frightened would in that case be a masochistic one, i.e. a destructive instinct turned against himself. An addition of this kind would perhaps account for the fact that his anxiety reaction is excessive, inadequate and hampering in its action' (S. 111).

<sup>2</sup> Since writing this book I find that Therese Benedek, starting from a different line of approach, has also come to the conclusion that anxiety originates in the destructive instinct. She says: 'Anxiety, therefore, is not a fear of death but the perception of the death-instinct that has been liberated in the organism—the perception of primary masochism' ('Todestrieb und Angst', 1931).

<sup>3</sup> 'The Economic Problem in Masochism' (1924).

yet another means of mastering those destructive impulses which still adhere to the organism. It can mobilize one part of them as a defence against the other part. In this way the id will undergo a division which is, I think, the first step in the formation of instinctual inhibitions and of the super-ego and which may be the same thing as primal repression.<sup>1</sup> We may suppose that a division of this sort is rendered possible by the fact that, as soon as the process of incorporation has begun, the incorporated object becomes the vehicle of defence against the destructive impulses within the organism.<sup>2</sup>

The anxiety evoked in the child by his destructive impulses takes effect, I think, in two ways. In the first place it makes him afraid of being exterminated himself by those very impulses, *i.e.* it relates to an internal instinctual danger;<sup>3</sup> and in the second place it focuses his fears on his external object, against whom his sadistic feelings are directed, as a source of danger. This fear of an object seems to have its earliest basis in external reality in the child's

<sup>1</sup> In *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 31, Freud writes: 'We are not yet in a position to say whether it may not be the emergence of the super-ego which differentiates primal repression from secondary repression. At any rate we know that the child's earliest outbreaks of anxiety, which are extremely intense, occur before the super-ego has come into being; and it is not at all unlikely that quantitative factors, such as an excessive degree of excitement and the breaking through of the barrier against stimuli, are the immediate cause of primal repression.'

<sup>2</sup> The process by which the object is internalized will be discussed later on. At present it is enough to say that, in the writer's opinion, the incorporated object at once assumes the functions of a super-ego.

<sup>3</sup> In early analysis we come across numerous representations of this anxiety. Here is an example: A five-year-old boy used to pretend that he had all sorts of wild animals, such as elephants, leopards, hyenas and wolves, to help him against his enemies. Each animal had a special function. The elephants were to stamp the foe to a pulp, the leopards to tear him to bits and the hyenas and wolves to eat him up. He sometimes imagined that these wild animals who were in his service would turn against him, and this idea used to arouse very great anxiety in him. It turned out that the animals stood in his unconscious for the various sources of his sadism—the elephant being his muscular sadism; the animals that tore, his teeth and nails; and the wolves, his excrements. His fear that those dangerous animals which he had tamed would themselves exterminate him was referable to his fear of his own sadism as a dangerous internal enemy.—Let me also remind the reader of the common expression 'to burst with rage'. In my analyses of small children I have repeatedly come across representations of the idea underlying this figure of speech.



growing knowledge—a knowledge based on the development of his ego and a concomitant power of testing by reality—of his mother as someone who either gives or withholds gratification, and thus in his growing knowledge of the power of his object in relation to the satisfaction of his needs. In this connection it would appear that he displaces the full burden of his intolerable fear of instinctual dangers on to his object, thus exchanging internal dangers for external ones. From these external dangers his immature ego then seeks to protect itself by destroying his object.

We must now go on to consider in what way a deflection of the death-instinct outwards influences the relations of the child to his objects and leads to the full expansion of his sadism. His growing oral sadism reaches its climax during and after weaning and leads to the fullest activation and development of sadistic tendencies flowing from every source. He has certain oral-sadistic phantasies of a quite definite character, seeming to form a link<sup>1</sup> between the oral-sucking and oral-biting stages, in which he gets possession of the contents of his mother's breast by sucking and scooping it out. This desire to suck and scoop out, first directed to her breast, soon extends to the inside of her body.<sup>2</sup> In my article, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928), I have described an early stage of development which is governed by the child's aggressive tendencies against its mother's body and in which its predominant wish is to rob her body of its contents and destroy it.

<sup>1</sup> Abraham has drawn attention to the vampire-like behaviour of some people and has explained it as being the effect of a regression from the oral-sadistic to the oral-sucking stage. ('Oral Erotism and Character', 1924, p. 401.)

<sup>2</sup> In discussing this subject with me, Edward Glover suggested that the feeling of emptiness in its body which the small child experiences as a result of lack of oral gratification might be a point of departure for phantasies of assault on its mother's body, since it might give rise to phantasies of the mother's body being full of all the desired nourishment. Going over my data once more, I find that his supposition is completely borne out. It seems to me to throw fresh light upon the steps by which the transition is effected from sucking out and devouring the mother's breast to attacking the inside of her body. In this connection Dr. Glover also mentioned Radó's theory of an 'alimentary orgasm' ('The Psychic Effects of Intoxicants', 1926), in virtue of which gratification passes over from the mouth to the stomach and intestines.

As far as can be seen, the sadistic tendency most closely allied to oral sadism is urethral sadism. Observation has shown that children's phantasies of destroying by flooding, drowning, soaking, burning and poisoning by means of enormous quantities of urine are a sadistic reaction to their having been deprived of fluid by their mother and are ultimately directed against her breast. I should like in this connection to point out the great importance, hitherto little recognized, of urethral sadism in the development of the child.<sup>1</sup> Phantasies, familiar to analysts, of flooding and destroying things by means of great quantities of urine,<sup>2</sup> and the more generally known connection between playing with fire and bed-wetting,<sup>3</sup> are merely the more visible and less repressed signs of the impulses which are attached to the function of urinating. In analysing both grown-up patients and children I have constantly come across phantasies in which urine was imagined as a burning, dissolving and corrupting liquid and as a secret and insidious poison. These urethral-sadistic phantasies have no small share in giving the penis the unconscious significance of an instrument of cruelty and in bringing about disturbances of sexual potency in the male. In a number of instances I have found that bed-wetting was caused by phantasies of this kind.

Every other vehicle of sadistic attack that the child employs, such as anal sadism and muscular sadism, is in the first instance levelled against its mother's frustrating breast; but it is soon directed to the inside of her body, which thus becomes the target of sadistic onslaughts coming from every source at once and raised to the highest pitch

<sup>1</sup> In his 'The Narcissistic Evaluation of Excretory Processes' (1920), in connection with a case of strongly developed urethral sadism, Abraham states that in neurotic persons 'we find the functions and products of the bowel and bladder used as vehicles of hostile impulses' (p. 319).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. in especial Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), and *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (1905); also Sadger, 'Über Urethralerotik' (1910); Abraham, 'Ejaculatio Praecox' (1917) and 'The Narcissistic Evaluation of Excretory Processes' (1920), and Rank, 'Psychoanalytische Beiträge zur Mythenforschung' (1919).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Freud's remarks on this connection in his 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905).



of intensity. In early analysis these destructive desires of the small child constantly alternate between anal-sadistic desires, desires to devour its mother's body and desires to wet it; but their primal aim of eating up and destroying her breast is always discernible in them.<sup>1</sup>

The phase of life in which the child's imaginary sadistic attacks against the inside of its mother's body are predominant and in which its sadism reaches a maximum strength in every source from which it flows is introduced by the oral-sadistic stage of development and comes to an end with the decline of the earlier anal-sadistic stage.

Abraham's work has shown that the pleasure the infant gets from biting is not only due to libidinal gratification of its erotogenic zones but is connected with strongly marked destructive cravings which aim at the injury or annihilation of its object. This is still more so in the phase of maximal sadism. The idea of an infant of from six to twelve months trying to destroy its mother by every method at the disposal of its sadistic tendencies—with its teeth, nails and excreta and with the whole of its body, transformed in imagination into all kinds of dangerous weapons—presents a horrifying, not to say an unbelievable, picture to our minds. And it is difficult, as I know from my own experience, to bring oneself to recognize that such an abhorrent idea answers to the truth. But the abundance, force and multiplicity of the imaginary cruelties

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924), p. 47, Abraham has pointed out that criminal phantasies of manic patients are for the most part directed against their mother, and he gives a striking example of this in a patient who identified himself in his imagination with the Emperor Nero, who killed his mother and wanted to burn down Rome (a mother symbol). But according to Abraham these destructive impulses of the son against his mother are secondary in character, being originally aimed at his father. In my view these attacks on her body have their origin in oral-sadistic attacks upon her breast and are therefore primary; but in so far as they are reinforced by his original hatred of his father's penis as he imagines it to exist inside her body and are centred upon that object and culminate in its destruction, they are directed against his father to an extent sufficient to influence the whole course of his Oedipus conflict. Thus it is true to say that the son's primary hatred of his father is in part displaced on to his mother. In Chapter XII. we shall discuss in detail the significance of this displacement in the sexual development of the male child.

which accompany these cravings are displayed before our eyes in early analyses so clearly and forcibly that they leave no room for doubt. We are already familiar with those sadistic phantasies of the child which find their culmination in cannibalism, and this makes it easier for us to accept the further fact that as its methods of sadistic attack become enlarged so do its sadistic phantasies gain in fulness and vigour. This element of *intensification* of impulse seems to me to be the key to the whole matter. If what intensifies sadism is libidinal frustration, we can readily understand that the destructive cravings which are fused with the libidinal ones and cannot be gratified—in the first instance, that is, oral-sadistic cravings—should lead to a further intensification of sadism and to an activation of all its methods.

In early analyses we find, furthermore, that oral frustration arouses in the child an unconscious knowledge that its parents enjoy mutual sexual pleasures and a belief at first that these are of an oral sort. Under the pressure of its own frustration it reacts to this phantasy with envy of its parents, and this in turn gives rise to hatred of them. Its cravings to scoop and suck out now lead it to want to suck out and devour all the fluids and other substances which its parents (or rather their organs) contain, including what they have received from one another in oral copulation.<sup>1</sup> Freud has shown that the sexual theories of children are a phylogenetic heritage, and from what has been said above it appears that an unconscious knowledge of this kind about sexual intercourse between the parents, together with phantasies concerning it, already emerge at this very early stage of development. Oral envy is one of the motive forces which make children of both sexes want

<sup>1</sup> In a short communication, 'A Paranoid Mechanism as seen in the Analysis of a Child' (1928), M. N. Searl has reported a case of intensely oral-sadistic phantasies of this kind, in which the child's craving to suck out of its father what he had taken from its mother's breast was bound up with paranoid mechanisms. The great power exerted by phantasies of this sort, which are connected with an intense oral sadism and which consequently pave the way for particularly aggressive impulses against the inside of the mother's body, is, I have since found, characteristic of psychotic disorders.



to push their way into their mother's body and which arouse the epistemophilic instinct allied to that desire.<sup>1</sup> Their destructive impulses, however, soon cease to be directed against the mother alone and become extended to the father. For they imagine that his penis is incorporated by her during oral copulation and remains inside her (the father being equipped with a great many), so that their attacks on her body are also levelled at his penis inside it.

I think that the reason why, in the deepest layers of his mind, the boy has such a tremendous fear of his mother as the castrator and why he harbours the idea, so closely associated with that fear, of the 'woman with a penis', is that he is afraid of her as a person whose body contains his father's penis; so that, ultimately, what he is afraid of is his father's penis incorporated in his mother.<sup>2</sup> The displacement of feelings of hatred and anxiety from the father's penis to the mother's body which harbours it is very important, I think, in the aetiology of mental disorders and is an underlying factor in disturbances of sexual development and in the adoption of a homosexual attitude in the male individual;<sup>3</sup> and, in my view, his fear of his mother's imaginary penis is an intermediate step in this process of displacement. For in this way he modifies his greater fear of his father's penis inside her—a fear which is quite overpowering, because at this early stage of development the principle of *pars pro toto* holds good and the penis represents the father in person. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'Psycho-Analytical Studies on Character-Formation' (1925).

<sup>2</sup> In his 'Homosexualität und Ödipuskomplex' (1926) Felix Boehm draws attention to the significance of phantasies frequently found in men that their father's penis has been retained by their mother after copulation and is hidden inside her vagina. He also points out that 'the various notions of a concealed female penis exert a pathological influence in virtue of the fact that they are brought into unconscious relation with the idea of a big and dreaded penis belonging to the father, which is hidden inside the mother'.—In psycho-analytical literature frequent mention is made of phantasies of meeting the father's penis in the mother's womb and of witnessing copulation between the parents, or of being damaged by it, during intra-uterine life.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chapter XII.

penis inside the mother represents a combination of father and mother in one person,<sup>1</sup> and this combination is regarded as a particularly terrifying and threatening one. As has been pointed out earlier, at its period of maximal strength the child's sadism is centred round coitus between his parents. The death-wishes he feels against them during the primal scene or in his primal phantasies are associated with sadistic phantasies which are extraordinarily rich in content and which involve the sadistic destruction of his parents both singly and together.

The child also has phantasies in which his parents destroy each other by means of their genitals and excrements which are imagined as dangerous weapons. These phantasies have important effects and are very numerous, containing such ideas as that the penis, incorporated in the mother, turns into a dangerous animal or into weapons loaded with explosive substances; or that her vagina, too, becomes a dangerous animal or some instrument of death, as, for instance, a poisoned mouse-trap. Since such phantasies are wish-phantasies and since his sexual theories are largely fed by sadistic desires, the child has a sense of guilt about the injuries which, in his imagination, his parents inflict on each other.

In addition to the quantitative increase which the child's sadism undergoes at every point of origin, qualitative changes take place in it and serve to heighten it still further. In the later part of the sadistic phase the child's imaginary attacks on his object, which are of a very violent nature and made by every method at the disposal of his sadism, become extended to include more secret and subtle methods which make them all the more dangerous. In the first part of this phase, for instance, where open violence reigns, excrements are regarded as instruments of direct assault; but later they acquire significance as substances of an explosive or poisonous kind. All these elements taken together

<sup>1</sup> I have noticed in boys' analyses time and again that attempts to attack me were directed more especially against my head or feet or nose, and I have found that it was not the female penis which they were thus attacking but the father's penis which had been incorporated in me or affixed to my person.



give rise to sadistic phantasies whose number, variety and richness are wellnigh inexhaustible. Moreover, these sadistic impulses against his father and mother copulating together lead the child to expect punishment from both parents in concert. In this early stage, however, his anxiety serves to intensify his sadism and to increase his impulse to destroy the dangerous object, so that he brings a still greater amount of sadistic and destructive wishes to bear upon his combined parents and is correspondingly more afraid of them as a hostile entity.

According to my view, the Oedipus conflict sets in in the boy as soon as he begins to have feelings of hatred against his father's penis and to want to achieve genital union with his mother and destroy his father's penis which he imagines to be inside her body. I consider that early genital impulses and phantasies, although they set in during the phase dominated by sadism, constitute, in children of both sexes, the early stages of the Oedipus conflict, because they satisfy the accepted criteria for it. Although the child's pre-genital impulses are still in the ascendant, it is already beginning to feel, in addition to oral, urethral and anal desires, genital desires for the parent of the opposite sex and jealousy and hatred of the parent of the same sex and to experience a conflict between its love and its hatred of the latter. We may even go so far as to say that the Oedipus conflict owes its very acuteness to this early situation. The small girl, for instance, while turning from her mother with feelings of hatred and disappointment and directing her oral and genital desires towards her father, is yet bound to the former by the powerful ties of her oral fixations and of her helplessness in general; and the small boy is drawn to his father by his positive oral attachment, and away from him by his feelings of hatred that arise from the early Oedipus situation. But the conflict is not so clearly visible in this stage of the child's development as it is later on. This, I think, is partly due to the fact that the small child has less means of giving expression to its feelings and that its relations to its objects are as yet confused and

vague. A part of its reactions to its object are applied to its phantasy-objects;<sup>1</sup> and it often directs the bulk of its anxiety and hatred towards the latter—in especial towards internalized objects—so that its attitude towards its parents only reflects a portion of the difficulties it experiences in its attitude to its object. But these difficulties find expression in a number of other ways. It has been my invariable experience, for instance, that the night-terrors and phobias of small children are already due to the presence of an Oedipus conflict.

I do not think that a sharp distinction can be made between the early stages of the Oedipus conflict and the later ones.<sup>2</sup> Since, as far as my observations show, the genital impulses set in at the same time as the pre-genital ones and influence and modify them, and since, as a result of this early association, they themselves bear traces of certain pre-genital impulses even in later stages of development, the attainment of the genital stage merely means a strengthening of the genital impulses. That the pre-genital and the genital impulses are thus merged together is seen from the well-known fact that when children witness the primal scene or have primal phantasies—both events of a genital character—they experience very powerful pre-genital impulses, such as bed-wetting and defaecating, accompanied by sadistic phantasies directed towards their copulating parents.

According to my observation, the child's masturbation phantasies have as their nucleus early sadistic phantasies centred upon its parents' copulation. It is those destructive impulses, fused with libidinal ones, which cause the super-

<sup>1</sup> We shall discuss the various directions in which the child's object-relationships flow later on. It attaches to its imaginary objects not only feelings of hatred and anxiety but positive feelings as well. In doing this it withdraws them from its real objects, and if its relations to its imaginary objects are too powerful, both in a negative and a positive sense, it cannot adequately attach either its sadistic phantasies or its restitutive ones to its real objects, with the result that it undergoes disturbances of its adaptation to reality and of its object-relationships.

<sup>2</sup> I do not, for instance, think that Fenichel is justified in differentiating 'pre-genital precursors of the Oedipus complex' from the Oedipus complex itself, as he does in his 'Pre-genital Antecedents of the Oedipus Complex' (1930).



ego to put up defences against masturbation phantasies and, incidentally, against masturbation itself. The child's sense of guilt about its early genital masturbation is thus derived from its sadistic phantasies directed against its parents. And since, furthermore, those masturbation phantasies contain the essence of its Oedipus conflict and can therefore be regarded as the focal point of its whole sexual life, the sense of guilt it has on account of its libidinal impulses is really a reaction to the destructive impulses that are knit up with them.<sup>1</sup> If this is so, then not only would it not be the incestuous tendencies which give rise in the first instance to a sense of guilt, but fear of incest itself would ultimately be derived from the destructive impulses which have entered into a permanent partnership with the child's earliest incestuous desires.

If we are right in supposing that the child's Oedipus tendencies set in in the phase of maximal sadism, we are led to accept the view that it is chiefly impulses of hate which bring on the Oedipus conflict and the formation of the super-ego and which govern the earliest and most decisive stages of both. Such a view, though it may at first sight seem alien to the accepted theory of psycho-analysis, nevertheless fits in with our knowledge of the fact that the libido evolves to the genital stage out of the pre-genital stages. Freud has repeatedly pointed out that in the development of the individual hatred precedes love. In his 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915) he says: 'The relation of hate to objects is older than that of love. It is derived from the primal repudiation by the narcissistic ego of the external world whence flows the stream of stimuli' (p. 82); and again: 'The ego hates, abhors and pursues with intent to destroy all objects which are for it a source of painful feel-

<sup>1</sup> In a paper, 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego', which I read at the Psycho-Analytical Congress held in Oxford in 1929, I stated this view as follows: 'It is only in the later stages of the Oedipus conflict that the defence against the libidinal impulses makes its appearance; in the earlier stages it is against the accompanying *destructive* impulses that the defence is directed'.

At the same Congress Ernest Jones, in his paper 'Fear, Guilt and Hate', laid stress upon the importance of the aggressive tendencies in giving rise to the sense of guilt.

ings, without taking into account whether they mean to it frustration of sexual satisfaction or gratification of the needs of self-preservation' (p. 81).<sup>1</sup>

The orthodox view is that the formation of the superego begins in the phallic phase. In his 'Passing of the Oedipus Complex' (1924) Freud states that the Oedipus complex is succeeded by the erection of the super-ego—that it falls to pieces and the super-ego takes its place. Again, in his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), we read: 'Anxiety in animal phobias is thus an effective reaction of the ego to danger—the danger that is threatened being castration. There is no difference between this anxiety and the reality anxiety that the ego normally feels in situations of danger, except that its content remains unconscious and is only perceived in a distorted form' S. 67). According to this view, the anxiety which affects children until the beginning of the latency period would refer solely to fear of castration in the case of the boy and to fear of losing love in the case of the girl, and the super-ego would not start to form until the pre-genital stages had been left behind and would be the result of a regression to the oral stage. In *The Ego and the Id* (1927) Freud tells us that 'At the very beginning, in the primitive oral phase of the individual's existence, object cathexis and identification are hardly to be distinguished from each other' (p. 35): and 'it' (the super-ego) 'is really the precipitate of the first object cathexes of the id; the inheritor of the Oedipus complex after the dissolution of the latter'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929) he goes still further and says: 'This instinct' (of aggression) . . . 'is at the bottom of all the relations of affection and love between human beings—possibly with the single exception of that of a mother to her male child' (p. 89). My own view that the Oedipus conflict starts under the primacy of sadism seems to me to supplement what Freud says, since it gives another reason why hatred should be the basis of object-relationships in the fact that the child forms its relation with its parents—a relation that is so fundamental and so decisive for all its future object-relationships—during the time when its sadistic tendencies are at the height of their power. The ambivalence it feels towards its mother's breast as its first object becomes strengthened by the increasing oral frustration it undergoes and by the onset of its Oedipus conflict, until it grows into fully-developed sadism.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Frage der Laienanalyse* (1926), § 74.



My own observations have led me to believe that the formation of the super-ego is a simpler and more direct process. The Oedipus conflict and the super-ego set in, I believe, under the supremacy of the pre-genital impulses, and the objects which have been introjected in the oral-sadistic phase—the first object cathexes and identifications—form the beginnings of the early super-ego.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, what originates the formation of the super-ego and governs its earliest stages are the destructive impulses and the anxiety they arouse. In thus regarding the impulses of the individual as the fundamental factor in the formation of his super-ego we do not deny the importance of the objects themselves for this process, but we view it in a different light. The earliest identifications of the child reflect its objects in an unreal and distorted fashion. As we know from Abraham, in an early stage of development both real and introjected objects are mainly represented by their organs. We also know that the father's penis is an anxiety object *par excellence*, and is compared in the unconscious to dangerous weapons of various kinds and to terrifying animals which poison and devour, while the vagina represents a dangerous opening.<sup>2</sup> Early analysis shows that these equations are a universal mechanism of fundamental importance in the structure of the super-ego. As far as I can judge, the nucleus of the super-ego is to be found in the partial incorporation that takes place during the cannibalistic phase of development;<sup>3</sup> and the child's early imagos take the imprint of those pre-genital impulses.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In her paper, 'Privation and Guilt' (1929), Susan Isaacs points out that Freud's 'primary identification' probably plays a greater part in the formation of the super-ego than was originally supposed.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the phantasy, so often mentioned in psycho-analytic literature, of the *vagina dentata*.

<sup>3</sup> In the next chapter, and more especially in Chapter XI., I shall try to show that the child introjects both good imagos and bad ones, and that gradually, as his adaptation to reality and the formation of his super-ego go forward, those imagos approximate more and more closely to the real objects they represent. In this chapter I only intend to give a picture of the development of the child's sadistic tendencies and their connection with his early super-ego formation and anxiety-situations.

<sup>4</sup> In my 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928) I wrote: 'It does not seem understandable that a child of, say, four years old should set up in its

That the ego should regard the internalized object as so cruel an enemy of the id would follow logically from the fact that the destructive instinct which the ego has deflected to the outer world has become directed against that object, from which, in consequence, nothing but hostility against the id can be awaited. But as far as can be seen, a phylogenetic factor is also present in the origin of the very early and intense anxiety which, in my experience, the child feels in respect of his internalized object. The father of the primal horde was the external power which enforced an inhibition of instinct.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the history of man, the fear of his father which he had acquired would, when he began to internalize his object, serve in part as a defence against the anxiety which his destructive instinct in him gave rise to.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the formation of the super-ego, Freud seems to follow two lines of thought, which are to some extent mutually complementary. According to one the severity of the super-ego is derived from the severity of the real father whose prohibitions and commands it repeats.<sup>3</sup> According

mind an unreal, phantastic image of parents who devour, cut and bite. But it *does* seem understandable that in a child of one year old the anxiety caused by the beginning of the Oedipus conflict should take the form of a dread of being devoured and destroyed. The child itself desires to destroy its libidinal object by biting, devouring and cutting it, and this leads to anxiety, since the awakening of its Oedipus tendencies is followed by introjection of its object, which then becomes one from whom punishment is to be expected. The child now dreads a punishment corresponding to its offence, and the super-ego becomes something which bites, devours and cuts up.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Freud, *Totem und Tabu* (1912).

<sup>2</sup> The ego would, as it were, play off its two enemies, the object and the destructive instinct, against one another, although in so doing it would find itself in a very perilous position between the two opposed forces. That the dreaded father should in part be a protection against the destructive instinct may also be due to the admiration for his power which the individual would have acquired in the same phylogenetic way. This possibility receives support from the fact that in early analysis we find that quite small children of both sexes are not only afraid of their father but have a feeling of boundless admiration for his power—a feeling which is very deep-lying and primary in character. And we must remember that as children grow older, the part their super-ego plays, though that of a severe father, is not that of an unkind one. Freud concludes his paper on 'Humour' (1928) with these words: 'Finally, if the super-ego does try to comfort the ego by humour and to protect it from suffering, this does not conflict with its derivation from the parental institution'.

<sup>3</sup> In his 'Passing of the Oedipus Complex' (1924) Freud says that the ego



to the other, as indicated in one or two passages in his writings, its severity is an outcome of the destructive impulses of the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Psycho-Analysis has not followed up the second line of thought. As its literature shows, it has adopted the theory that the super-ego is derived from parental authority and has made this theory the basis of all further enquiry into the subject. Nevertheless, Freud has recently, in part, confirmed my own view,<sup>2</sup> which lays emphasis on the importance of the impulses of the individual himself as a factor

of the child turns away from the Oedipus complex in consequence of the threat of castration. 'The authority of the father or the parents is introjected into the ego and there forms the kernel of the super-ego, which takes its severity from the father, perpetuates his prohibition against incest, and so insures the ego against a recurrence of the libidinal object-cathexis' (p. 273). In *The Ego and the Id* (1926) we are told: 'Its' (the super-ego's) 'relation to the ego is not exhausted by the precept: "You ought to be such and such (like your father)"; it also comprises the prohibition: "You must not be such and such (like your father)"; that is, you may not do all that he does; many things are his prerogative". This double aspect of the ego-ideal derives from the fact that the ego-ideal had the task of effecting the repression of the Oedipus complex; indeed, it is to that revolutionary event that it owes its existence. Clearly the repression of the Oedipus complex was no easy task. The parents, and especially the father, were perceived as the obstacle to realization of the Oedipus wishes; so the child's ego brought in a reinforcement to help in carrying out the repression by erecting this same obstacle within itself. The strength to do this was, so to speak, borrowed from the father, and this loan was an extraordinarily momentous act. The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more intense the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of discipline, religious teaching, schooling and reading) the more exacting later on is the domination of the super-ego over the ego—in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt. I shall later bring forward a suggestion about the source of the power it employs to dominate in this way, the source, that is, of its compulsive character which manifests itself in the form of a categorical imperative' (p. 44).

<sup>1</sup> In *The Ego and the Id* (1926) he says: 'Every such identification is in the nature of a desexualization or even of a sublimation. It now seems as though when a transformation of this kind takes place there occurs at the same time an instinctual defusion. After sublimation the erotic component no longer has the power to bind the whole of the destructive elements that were previously combined with it, and these are released in the form of inclinations to aggression and destruction. This defusion would be the source of the general character of harshness and cruelty exhibited by the ideal—its dictatorial "Thou shalt"' (p. 80).

<sup>2</sup> In his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) we read: 'Experience has shown, however, that the severity which a child's super-ego develops in no way corresponds to the severity of the treatment it has itself experienced', and that 'the original severity of the super-ego does not—or not so much—represent the severity which has been experienced or anticipated from the object, but expresses the child's own aggressiveness towards the latter' (p. 116).

in the origin of his super-ego and on the fact that his super-ego is not identical with his real objects.<sup>1</sup>

I should like to call the early identifications made by the child 'early stages of super-ego formation' in the same way as I have used the term 'early stages of the Oedipus conflict'. In the earliest stages of the child's development the precipitates of its object cathexes exert an influence of a kind which characterizes them as a super-ego, although they differ in quality and mode of operation from the identifications belonging to later stages. And cruel as this super-ego formed under the supremacy of sadism may be, it nevertheless takes on the defence of the ego against the destructive instinct, and is thus already at this early stage the agency from which instinctual inhibitions proceed.

In his paper, 'Die Identifizierung' (1926), Fenichel has applied certain criteria which differentiate the 'precursors of the super-ego', as he calls those early identifications in accordance with a suggestion made by Reich,<sup>2</sup> from the super-ego itself. These precursors exist, he thinks, in a scattered state and independently of one another, and lack the unity, the severity, the opposition to the ego, the quality of being unconscious and the great power which characterize the actual super-ego as inheritor of the Oedipus complex. In my opinion such a differentiation is incorrect in several respects. As far as I have been able to observe, it is precisely the early super-ego which is especially severe; and, normally speaking, in no period of life is the opposition between ego and super-ego so strong as in early childhood. Indeed, this latter fact explains why in the first stages of

<sup>1</sup> My views are in agreement with those of Ernest Jones, Edward Glover, Joan Riviere and M. N. Searl, who, approaching the subject from different standpoints, have come to the conclusion that the child's early phantasy life and libidinal development play a large part in the evolution of the super-ego. Cf. 'A Symposium on Child Analysis' (1926); also a paper by Ernest Jones on 'The Origin and Structure of the Super-ego' (1926), in which he points out that 'there is every reason to think that the concept of the super-ego is a nodal point where we may expect all the obscure problems of Oedipus complex and narcissism on the one hand, and hate and sadism on the other, to meet' (p. 304).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Reich, *Der Triebhafte Charakter* (1925).



life the tension between the two is chiefly felt as anxiety. Furthermore, I have found that the commands and prohibitions of the super-ego are no less unconscious in the small child than in the adult, and that they are by no means identical with the commands that come from its real objects. Fenichel is right, I think, in saying that the super-ego of the child is not yet as closely organized as that of the grown-up person. But this point of difference, apart from not being universally true, since many small children exhibit a well-organized super-ego and many adults a scattered one, seems to me merely to be in keeping with the lesser degree of mental cohesion possessed by the small child as compared to the adult. We know that small children have a less highly organized ego than children in the latency period, yet we do not therefore say that they have no ego but only precursors of an ego.

It has already been said that in the phase of maximal sadism an increase of sadistic tendencies leads to an increase of anxiety. The threats uttered by the early super-ego against the id contain in detail the whole range of sadistic phantasies that were directed to the object, so that now every item of them is turned back against the ego. Thus the pressure of anxiety exerted in this early stage will correspond in degree to the amount of sadism originally present, and in quality to the variety and wealth of the accompanying sadistic phantasies.<sup>1</sup>

The gradual overcoming of sadism and anxiety is a result of the development of the libido.<sup>2</sup> But the very excess of his anxiety also impels the individual to overcome it. Anxiety assists the several erotogenic zones to grow in strength and gain the upper hand one after another. Thus the supremacy of the oral- and urethral-sadistic impulses is followed by the supremacy of the anal-sadistic impulses; and since the mechanisms belonging to the early anal-sadistic stage, however powerful they may be,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art' (1929).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the next chapter for a fuller discussion of this point.

are already acting on behalf of the defences which have been erected against anxiety arising from the earlier periods of the sadistic phase, it follows that that very anxiety which is pre-eminently an inhibiting agency in the development of the individual is also a factor of fundamental importance in promoting the growth of his ego and of his sexual life.

In this stage of the development of the individual his methods of defence are proportionate to the pressure of anxiety in him and are violent in the extreme. We know that in the early anal-sadistic stage what he is ejecting is his object, which he perceives as something hostile to him and which he equates with excrement. In my view, what he is also already ejecting is his terrifying super-ego which he has introjected in the oral-sadistic stage of his development. Thus his act of ejection is a means of defence employed by his fear-ridden ego against his super-ego; it expels his internalized objects and projects them into the outer world. The mechanisms of projection and expulsion in the individual are closely bound up with the process of super-ego formation. Just as his ego tries to defend itself against his super-ego by violently ejecting it and thus destroying it, so, urged on by the threats of that super-ego, it tries to rid itself of his sadistic id—that is, of his destructive tendencies—by the same method of forcible expulsion. In *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926) Freud says that he considers the idea of defence as well-fitted for ‘a general designation for all the methods used by the ego in those conflicts which may lead to a neurosis; whereas the idea of repression should be reserved for that particular method of defence which our line of investigation has first led us to understand’ (S. 106). He furthermore explicitly states the possibility ‘that repression is a process which stands in a special relationship to the genital organization of the libido and that the ego turns to other methods of defence when it has to protect itself against the libido in other stages of its organization’ (S. 65). My view is also supported by Abraham in a passage in which he says that ‘the tendency to spare



the object and to preserve it has grown out of the more primitive destructive tendency by a process of repression'.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the dividing line between the two anal-sadistic stages the same author writes as follows: 'In regarding this dividing line as extremely important we find ourselves in agreement with the ordinary medical view. For the division that we psycho-analysts have made on the strength of empirical data coincides in fact with the classification into neurosis and psychosis made by clinical medicine. But analysts, of course, would not attempt to make a rigid separation between neurotic and psychotic affections. They are, on the contrary, aware that the libido of any individual may regress beyond this dividing line between the two anal-sadistic phases, given a suitable exciting cause of illness, and given certain points of fixation in his libidinal development which facilitate a regression of this nature.'<sup>2</sup>

As we know, it is not in the actual structure of his mind that the normal man differs from the neurotic, but in the quantitative factors at work. The above quotations from Abraham imply that the difference between the psychotic and the neurotic person is also one of degree. My own psycho-analytical work with children has not only confirmed me in the opinion that the points of fixation for psychoses lie in the stages of development preceding the second anal level, but has convinced me that neurotic and normal children have points of fixation there as well, though in a minor degree.

We know that the psychotic has a far greater quantity of anxiety than the neurotic; yet the accepted theory of super-ego formation offers no explanation of the fact that such an overwhelming anxiety can come into being in those very early stages of development in which, according to the findings of Freud and Abraham, the fixations for the psychoses are situated. Freud's latest theories, brought

<sup>1</sup> 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924), p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 433.

forward in his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*, rule out the possibility that this immense quantity of anxiety might arise from the conversion of unsatisfied libido into anxiety. Nor can we assume that the child's fear of being devoured, cut up and killed by its parents is a reality fear. But if we suppose that this excessive anxiety can only be an effect of intra-psychic processes we shall not be so far from the theory put forward in these pages that early anxiety proceeds from the pressure of the super-ego. The pressure which, in an early stage of the child's development, the super-ego exerts on his destructive tendencies not only answers, both in degree and kind, to his sadistic phantasies, but arouses anxiety-situations which reflect the various periods which his sadistic phase covers. These anxiety-situations, furthermore, call out special mechanisms of defence on the part of his ego and determine the specific character his psychotic disorder will assume, as well as being decisive for his development in general.<sup>1</sup>

Before attempting to study the relationship between early anxiety-situations and the specific character of psychotic affections, however, let us first turn our attention to the way in which the formation of the super-ego and the development of object-relations affect each other. If it is true that the super-ego is formed at such an early stage of ego development, when the ego is still so far removed from reality, we must review the growth of object-relations in a new light. The fact that the individual creates a distorted picture of his objects in virtue of his own sadistic impulses not only puts a different complexion on the influence exerted by those objects and his relations to them on the formation of his super-ego, but, conversely, increases the importance of his super-ego formation in regard to his object-relations. When, as a small child, he first begins to introject his objects—and these, it must be remembered, are only very vaguely known to him and

<sup>1</sup> In *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926) Freud writes: 'It is possible that there is a close connection between the operative danger-situation and the form assumed by the neurosis that follows upon it' (S. 84-5).



mainly through their separate organs—his fear of those introjected objects sets in motion the mechanisms of ejection and projection, as we have already seen; and there now follows a reciprocal action between projection and introjection, which seems to be of fundamental importance not only for the formation of his super-ego but for the development of his object-relations to persons and his adaptation to reality. The steady and continual urge he is under to project his terrifying identifications on to his objects results, it would seem, in an increased impulse to repeat the process of introjection again and again, and is thus itself a decisive factor in the evolution of his relationship to objects.<sup>1</sup>

The interaction between object-relation and super-ego is also exhibited, I think, in the fact that at every stage of development the methods which the ego uses in its dealings with its object correspond exactly to those used by the super-ego towards the ego, and by the ego towards the super-ego and the id. In the sadistic phase the individual protects himself from his fear of his violent object, both introjected and external, by redoubling his own destructive attacks upon it in his imagination. In thus getting rid of his object his aim would in part be to silence the intolerable threats of his super-ego. But a reaction of this kind presupposes that the mechanism of projection has already begun to work along two lines—one by which the ego is putting the object in the place of the super-ego from which it wants to free itself, and another by which it is making the object stand for the id of which it also wants to be rid. In this way the amount of hatred which was primarily directed against the object is augmented by the amount attaching to the id and the super-ego. Thus it would seem that in people in whom the early anxiety-situations are too powerful and who have retained the

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915) Freud writes: 'The objects presenting themselves, in so far as they are sources of pleasure, are absorbed by the ego into itself, "introjected" (according to an expression coined by Ferenczi); while, on the other hand, the ego thrusts forth upon the external world whatever within itself gives rise to pain (*v. infra*: the mechanism of projection)' (p. 78).

defensive mechanisms belonging to that early stage, fear of the super-ego, if for external or intra-psychic reasons it oversteps certain bounds, will compel them to destroy their object and will form the basis for the development of a criminal type of behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

These too-powerful early anxiety-situations are also, I think, of fundamental importance in the aetiology of schizophrenia. But I can only support this view here by putting forward one or two suggestions. As has already been pointed out, by projecting his terrifying super-ego on to his objects, the individual increases his hatred of those objects and thus also his fear of them, with the result that, if his aggression and anxiety are excessive, his external world is changed into a place of terror and his objects into enemies and he is threatened with persecution both from the external world and from his introjected enemies. If his anxiety is too immense or if his ego cannot tolerate it, he will try to evade his fear of external enemies by putting his mechanisms of projection out of action; this would in its turn prevent any further introjection of objects from taking place and put an end to the growth of his relation to reality,<sup>2</sup> and he would be all the more exposed to fear of his already introjected objects. He would be in dread of being attacked and injured in various ways by an enemy within him from whom there was no escape. A fear of this kind is probably one of the deepest sources of hypochondria, and the excess of it, insusceptible as it is to any modification or displacement, would obviously call out particularly violent methods of defence. A disturbance like this of the mechanism of projection seems, moreover, to go along

<sup>1</sup> If crime does indeed spring from early anxiety in this way, our only hope of understanding the criminal and perhaps reforming him would seem to be to subject the deepest levels of his mental life to analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my paper, 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930).

Melitta Schmideberg has pointed out that the schizophrenic cuts himself off from the external world by taking refuge in his 'good' internal object—a manoeuvre which he accomplishes by ceasing to project and by over-compensating his love of his internal object in a narcissistic way and thus evading his fear of his 'bad' internal and external objects. (Cf. her articles



with a negation of intra-psychic reality.<sup>1</sup> The person thus affected denies,<sup>2</sup> and to a certain extent eliminates,<sup>3</sup> not only the *source* of his anxiety, but its *affect* as well. A whole number of phenomena belonging to the syndrome of schizophrenia can be explained as an attempt to ward off, master or contend with an internal enemy. Katatonia, for instance, could be regarded as an attempt to paralyse the introjected object and keep it immovable and so render it innocuous.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest period of the sadistic phase is characterized by the great violence of the attack made on the object. In a later period of this phase, coinciding with the early anal stage in which the anal-sadistic impulses take the lead, more secret methods of attack prevail, such as the use of poisonous and explosive materials. Excrements now represent poisons,<sup>5</sup> and in its phantasies the child uses faeces as persecuting agencies<sup>6</sup> against its objects and secretly

'The Rôle of Psychotic Mechanisms in Cultural Development', 1930, and 'A Contribution to the Psychology of Persecutory Ideas and Delusions', 1931.)

<sup>1</sup> In his paper, 'Stages in the Development of a Sense of Reality' (1913), Ferenczi has remarked that the complete denial of reality is a very early form of mental reaction and that the points of fixation for psychoses should be situated in a correspondingly early stage of development.

<sup>2</sup> According to Melitta Schmideberg, denial of the affect of anxiety is in part utilized to deny the existence of the introjected object with which the affects are equated (cf. 'A Contribution to the Psychology of Persecutory Ideas and Delusions', 1931).

<sup>3</sup> In his 'Über Skotomisation in der Schizophrenie' (1926) Laforgue has suggested the name 'scotomization' for this defensive mechanism and has drawn attention to its importance in schizophrenia.

<sup>4</sup> According to Melitta Schmideberg, katatonia represents death and is a means of escaping from the various forms of attack which the patient dreads (cf. *op. cit.*).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. my paper, 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930), also 'A Contribution to the Theory of Intellectual Inhibition' (1931). More recently, in a paper entitled 'Über respiratorische Introjektion' (1931), Fenichel has described a class of sadistic phantasies in which the excreta are instruments of killing, the faeces by poisoning and exploding, and the urine by poisoning. According to him these phantasies bring on a fear of being poisoned by excreta. His paper seems to me to corroborate the views already put forward by me in the above-mentioned articles.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ophuijsen, 'On the Origin of the Feeling of Persecution' (1919), and Stärcke, 'The Reversal of the Libido-Sign in Delusions of Persecution' (1919). According to them the paranoic's idea of the persecutor is derived from the unconscious idea of the scybalum inside his bowels and his equation of that scybalum with his persecutor's penis. I have found that the fear of pieces of

inserts them by a kind of magic<sup>1</sup> into the anus and other bodily apertures of those objects and leaves them there. In consequence it begins to be afraid of its own excrement, as a substance which is dangerous and harmful to its body, and of the incorporated excrements of its objects from whom it awaits similar secret attacks through the same dangerous medium. Thus its phantasies lead to a fear of having a multitude of persecutors inside its body and of being poisoned, and are the basis of hypochondriacal fears. They also serve to increase the fear aroused by the equation of the introjected object with faeces,<sup>2</sup> for that object is made still more dangerous by being likened to the poisonous and destructive scybalum. And the fact that, in consequence of its urethral-sadistic impulses, the child also thinks of urine as something dangerous, as something that burns, cuts and poisons, prepares it unconsciously to regard the penis as a sadistic organ and to dread its father's (the persecutor's)<sup>3</sup> dangerous penis within itself.

In the period in which it makes attacks by means of poisonous excreta, the child's fears of subterranean attacks upon itself on the part of its introjected and external objects become more manifold, in accordance with the greater variety and subtlety of its own sadistic procedures; and they push the activity of its mechanisms of projection to their furthest limits. Its anxiety spreads out and is distributed over many objects and sources of danger in the outer world, so that it now expects to be attacked by a great number of persecutors.<sup>4</sup> The quality of secrecy and

stool as persecutors was ultimately derived from sadistic phantasies in which urine and faeces were employed as poisonous and destructive weapons against the mother's body.

<sup>1</sup> Róheim, in his 'Nach dem Tode des Urvaters' (1923), has shown that in primitive tribes the black magician kills a man or makes him ill by magically inserting excrements or their equivalents into his body.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham ('A Short Study of the Development of the Libido', 1924) has shown that the hated object is equated with faeces. Cf. also Róheim, 'Nach dem Tode des Urvaters' (1923), and Simmel, 'The Doctor-Game, Illness, and the Profession of Medicine' (1926).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my paper, 'A Contribution to the Theory of Intellectual Inhibition' (1931).

<sup>4</sup> The fear of numerous persecutors has not only an anal-sadistic origin, as



cunning which it attributes to those attacks leads it to observe the world about it with a watchful and suspicious eye and thus to strengthen its relations to reality, one-sided and false though that relation may be; while its fear of the introjected object, notwithstanding the mechanisms of projection, is a constant incentive to it to keep those mechanisms in operation.

The fixation-point for paranoia is, I think, this period of the phase of maximal sadism, in which the child's attacks upon the interior of its mother's body and the penis it imagines to be there are carried out by means of poisonous and dangerous excreta;<sup>1</sup> and delusions of reference and persecution spring from the anxiety-situations attached to those attacks.<sup>2</sup>

According to my view, the child's fear of its introjected objects urges it to displace that fear into the external world. In doing this it takes its organs, objects, faeces and all manner of things, as well as its internalized objects, and equates them with its external objects; and it also distri-

being a fear of many persecuting faeces, but an oral one as well. In my experience the child's sexual theory, according to which its mother incorporates a new penis every time she copulates and its father is provided with a quantity of penises, contributes to its fear of having a great number of persecutors.

Melitta Schmideberg regards this multiplicity of persecutors as being a projection of the child's own oral-sadistic attacks on its father's penis, each separate bit of his penis becoming a new object of anxiety (cf. her paper, 'The Rôle of Psychotic Mechanisms in Cultural Development', 1930).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also my paper, 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930). I find myself in agreement with Abraham's view that in the paranoid the libido regresses to the earlier anal stage, for according to me the phase of maximal sadism is introduced by the oral-sadistic impulses and terminates with the decline of the earlier anal stage. The period of this phase which has been described above and which I consider to be fundamental for paranoia will be seen to be under the supremacy of the earlier anal stage.—What has been said here adds something, I think, to the findings of Abraham. It shows that in the above-mentioned phase the various means of sadism are employed in conjunction and to their fullest capacity and that the urethral-sadistic tendencies are of fundamental importance as well as the oral-sadistic ones. It has also furnished a certain amount of information about the structure of those phantasies in which the anal-sadistic tendencies belonging to the earlier anal stage find expression.

<sup>2</sup> Melitta Schmideberg has brought forward two cases in which delusional ideas of persecution and reference were derived from anxiety-situations of this kind (cf. her paper, 'A Contribution to the Psychology of Persecutory Ideas and Delusions', 1931).

butes its fear of its external object over a great number of objects by equating one with another.<sup>1</sup>

A relation of this kind to many objects, based as it is in part on anxiety and brought about by means of equations,<sup>2</sup> may be called a phobic anxiety-mechanism, and is, I think, a further advance on the part of the individual in the establishment of a relationship to objects and an adaptation to reality; for his earliest object-relation only included one thing, *i.e.* his mother's breast as representing his mother. In the imagination of the small child these multiple objects are situated inside his mother's body, and this place is also the chief objective of his destructive and libidinal tendencies and also of his awakening epistemophilic impulses. As his sadistic tendencies increase and he takes possession in phantasy of the interior of his mother's body, that part of her becomes the representative of her whole person as an object, and at the same time symbolizes the external world and reality. Indeed, through her breast, she originally represented the external world for him. But now the inside of her body represents object and outer world in a more extended sense, because it has become the place which contains, by reason of the wider distribution of his anxiety, more manifold objects.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the child's sadistic phantasies about the interior of his mother's body lay down for him a fundamental relation to the external world and to reality. But his aggression and the anxiety he has in consequence of it,

<sup>1</sup> The child's destructive desires against its objects, as represented by bodily organs, arouse its fear of those organs and objects. Such a fear, together with its libidinal interests, leads it to equate those organs with other things, which thus in their turn become objects of anxiety, so that it is continually moving away from them and making fresh equations; and in this way it forms a system of symbolization (cf. my paper, 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego', 1930).

<sup>2</sup> As Ferenczi has shown, the small child seeks to re-discover its own organs and their functions in every outside thing by means of identification which is the precursor of symbolization.

<sup>3</sup> According to Ernest Jones ('The Theory of Symbolism', 1916) the pleasure-principle enables the individual to liken quite different things to each other if the interest they arouse is of a similar kind. This view lays stress on the importance of libidinal interest as a basic factor in processes of identification and symbolization.



though one foundation of his object-relations, is not the only one. His libido is also active at the same time and makes its influence felt. His libidinal relations to his objects and the influence exerted by reality counteract his fear of internal and external enemies. His belief in the existence of kindly and helpful figures—a belief which is founded upon the efficacy of his libido—enables his reality-objects to emerge ever more powerfully and his phantastic imagos to recede into the background.<sup>1</sup>

In this way the interaction between super-ego formation and object-relation, based on an interaction between projection and introjection, profoundly influences his development. In the early stages the projection of his terrifying imagos into the external world turns that world into a place of danger and his objects into enemies; while the simultaneous introjection of real objects who are in fact well-disposed to him works in the opposite direction and lessens the force of his fear of the terrifying imagos. Viewed in this light, super-ego formation, object-relations and adaptation to reality are the result of an interaction between the projection of the individual's sadistic impulses and the introjection of his objects.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929).

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OBSESSIONAL NEUROSIS AND THE EARLY STAGES OF THE SUPER-EGO

**I**N the foregoing chapter we have considered the content and effects of the early anxiety-situations of the individual. We shall now go on to examine in what way his libido and his relations to real objects bring about a modification of those anxiety-situations.

As a result of the oral frustration the child undergoes it seeks new sources of gratification.<sup>1</sup> The little girl turns away from her mother and takes her father's penis as an object of gratification. At first this gratification is of an oral nature, but there are genital tendencies at work already.<sup>2</sup> The small boy also evolves a positive attitude toward his father's penis out of his oral-sucking position, in virtue of the assimilation of the breast to a penis.<sup>3</sup> An oral-sucking fixation to the father's penis is, I have found, a primal factor in the establishment of true homosexuality.<sup>4</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Notes on Oral Character-Formation' (1925) Edward Glover has pointed out that frustration is a stimulating factor in the development of the individual.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my papers, 'The Psychological Principles of Infant Analysis' (1926) and 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

<sup>3</sup> In his paper, 'Nach dem Tode des Urvaters' (1923), Róheim argues that through having devoured the corpse of their primal father his sons came to look on him as the nourishing mother. In this way, he thinks, they transferred the love which they had hitherto felt for their mother alone to their father as well; and their attitude to him, from having been a purely negative one, acquired a positive element.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Freud, *Kindheitserinnerung Leonardo da Vincis* (1910). We shall follow these developmental processes more closely in Chapter XII. in discussing the sexual development of the boy.



ordinarily his feelings of hatred and anxiety towards his father, arising out of his awakening Oedipus tendencies, militate against this fixation.<sup>1</sup> If his development goes forward successfully his positive attitude towards his father's penis becomes the basis of a good relationship to persons of his own sex and allows him to achieve a complete heterosexual position at the same time. Whilst, however, in the boy an oral-sucking relation to his father's penis may, under certain circumstances, lead to homosexuality, in the girl it is normally the precursor of heterosexual impulses and of the Oedipus conflict. A move of this sort on her part towards the father, and, in the boy, a second orientation towards the mother as a genital love-object, set up a new aim for the libidinal gratification of the child, in which the genitals begin to make their influence felt.

In that early phase of development which I have termed the phase of maximal sadism, I have found that all the pre-genital stages and the genital stage as well are cathected in rapid succession. What then happens is that the libido enters upon a struggle with the destructive impulses and gradually consolidates its positions. Side by side with the *polarity* of the life-instinct and the death-instinct we may, I think, place their *interaction* as a fundamental factor in the dynamic processes of the mind. There is an indissoluble bond between the libido and the destructive tendencies which puts the former to a great extent in the power of the latter. But the vicious circle dominated by the death-instinct, in which aggression gives rise to anxiety and anxiety reinforces aggression, can be broken through by the libidinal

<sup>1</sup> The following example, taken from direct observation, illustrates the course of such a change from like to dislike. In the months which followed his weaning, a small boy showed a preference for fish foods as well as a great interest in fish in general. At the age of one he used often to look on with intense and obviously pleasurable interest while his mother killed and prepared fish in the kitchen. Soon afterwards he developed a great dislike of fish foods, which spread to a dislike of seeing fish and then to a regular fish phobia. Experience of numerous early analyses in which attacks on fishes, snakes and lizards have been seen to represent attacks on the father's penis enable us, I think, to understand the child's behaviour. The killing of fish by his mother satisfied his sadistic impulses against his father's penis in a very high degree, and this made him afraid of his father, or, more correctly, of his father's penis.

forces when these have gained in strength. As we know, in the early stages of development the life-instinct has to exert its power to the utmost in order to maintain itself against the death-instinct. But this very necessity stimulates the growth of the sexual life of the individual.

Since the child's genital impulses remain concealed for a long time, we are not able clearly to discern the fluctuations and interminglings of the various phases of development which result from the conflict between its destructive and its libidinal impulses. The emergence of the stages of organization with which we are acquainted corresponds, I should say, not only to the positions which the libido has won and established in its struggle with the destructive instinct, but, since these two components are forever united as well as opposed, to a growing adjustment between them.

It is true that on the surface the small child shows relatively little of that tremendous sadism which is revealed in the analysis of its deepest mental levels. But my contention that in the earliest stages of its development the child goes through a time in which its sadistic tendencies reach their maximum at every source is, after all, only an amplification of the accepted and well-established theory that the child passes on from a stage of oral sadism (cannibalism) to one of anal sadism. We must also bear in mind that those cannibalistic tendencies themselves find no expression commensurate with their psychological import; for normally we only get comparatively faint indications of the small child's impulses to destroy its object. What we see are only derivatives of its phantasies in that connection. That the child should express its intensely sadistic impulses towards its external objects in such a weakened form becomes more intelligible if we assume that the extravagant phantasies which arise in a very early stage of its development never become conscious at all. It should, moreover, be remembered that the stage of ego-development in which such phantasies occur is a very early one and that the child's relations to reality are as yet very much



influenced by its imaginative life. A further reason may be found in its inferiority in size and strength to the adult and in its biologically determined dependence on him; for we see how much more strongly it manifests its destructive instincts towards inanimate things, small animals, and so on. And finally, it may be that even in the earliest stages of its life genital impulses, although themselves still hidden from view, are already exerting a restraining influence upon its sadistic ones and are assisting to lessen the force with which they would otherwise express themselves against its external object. As far as can be seen, there exists in the small child, side by side with its relations to real objects but on a different plane as it were, relations which are based on its relations to its unreal imagos both as excessively good and excessively bad figures. Ordinarily, these two kinds of object-relations intermingle and colour each other to an ever increasing extent. (This is the process which I have described as an interaction between super-ego formation and object-relations.) But in the mind of the quite small child its real objects and its imaginary ones are still widely separated; and this may in part account for its not exhibiting as much sadism and anxiety towards its real objects as would be expected from the character of its phantasies.

As we know, and as Abraham especially has pointed out, the nature of the child's object-relations and character-formation is very strongly determined by whether its predominant fixations are situated in the oral-sucking stage or in the oral-sadistic one. In my opinion this factor is decisive for the formation of the super-ego as well. The introjection of a kindly mother leads to the setting up of a friendly father-imago, owing to the equation of breast with penis.<sup>1</sup> In the construction of the super-ego, too, fixations in the oral-sucking stage will counteract the terrify-

<sup>1</sup> Abraham writes, in 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924), p. 490: 'Another point to be noted in regard to the part of the body that has been introjected is that the penis is regularly assimilated to the female breast, and that other parts of the body, such as the finger, the foot, hair, faeces and buttocks, can be made to stand for those two organs in a secondary way. . . .'

ing identifications which are made under the supremacy of oral-sadistic impulses.

As the sadistic tendencies of the child diminish, the threats made by his super-ego become somewhat reduced in violence and the reactions of his ego also undergo a change. Hitherto the excessive fear of his super-ego and objects which has dominated the earliest stages of his life has called out proportionately violent reactions in his ego. It would seem that the ego tries to defend itself at first against the super-ego by scotomizing it—to use Laforgue's word—and then by ejecting it. As soon as it attempts to outwit the super-ego and reduce the latter's opposition to the id-impulses,<sup>1</sup> it is, I think, beginning to react in a way which takes cognizance of the power of the super-ego. As the later anal stage sets in, the ego recognizes that power ever more clearly and is led to make progressive attempts to come to terms with it. This recognition brings with it a recognition of the necessity of obeying the commands of the super-ego.

The behaviour of the ego to the id, which in a somewhat earlier stage has been one of ejection, becomes in the later anal stage one of suppression—or rather, of repression in the true sense of the word.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the amount of hatred it feels towards the object is lessened, since much of that hatred is derived from what was once attached to the super-ego and the id. The increase of the libidinal components and the concomitant diminution of the destructive ones also serve to moderate the primary sadistic tendencies that were directed to the object. When this happens the ego seems to become more conscious of its fear of suffering retribution at the hands of its object. It thus acknowledges the power of the object in addition

<sup>1</sup> In his *Psychoanalyse der Gesamtpersönlichkeit* (1927) Alexander has pointed out that the id in a sense corrupts the super-ego and that this 'understanding' between them enables it to carry out its forbidden actions.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926) Freud says: 'Nevertheless, we must bear in mind for future consideration the possibility that repression is a process which has a special relation to the genital organization of the libido, and that the ego uses other methods of defence for warding off the libido on different levels of its organization. . . .'



to submitting to, and accepting the prohibitions of, a severe super-ego. Its acceptance of external reality<sup>1</sup> is thus dependent upon its acceptance of intra-psychic reality, the more so as its endeavour is to make the super-ego and the object converge. A convergence of this kind is a further step in the direction of modifying anxiety, and, assisted by mechanisms of projection and displacement, goes along with a development of the individual's relationship to reality. The principal method which the ego adopts for overcoming anxiety at this point is to try to satisfy both external and internalized objects. This induces it to ensure the safety of its objects—a reaction which Abraham has allocated to the later anal stage.

This changed method of behaviour towards the object may show itself in two ways: the individual may turn *away* from it, on account of his fear of it as a source of danger and also in order to shield it from his own sadistic impulses; or he may turn *towards* it with greater positive feeling. An object-relation of this kind is brought about by a splitting up of the mother-imago into a good and a bad one. The ambivalence of the individual towards his object not only represents a further step in the development of his object-relations but is a mechanism of fundamental importance for overcoming his fear of his super-ego by distributing it, after having directed it outwards, over a number of objects, so that certain ones stand for the object which he has attacked and which therefore threatens him with danger, and others, especially his mother, signify the kindly, protecting person.

As the individual advances to the genital stage and his introjected imagos become more friendly, his super-ego changes its mode of behaviour, and the process of overcoming anxiety becomes increasingly successful. When the hitherto overpowering threats of the super-ego become toned down into admonitions and reproaches, the ego can

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Problem of the Acceptance of Unpleasant Ideas' (1926) Ferenczi remarks that knowledge of external reality goes along with knowledge of psychological reality.

find support against them in its positive relationships. It can now employ restitutive mechanisms and reaction-formations of pity towards its objects so as to placate the super-ego;<sup>1</sup> and the love and recognition it receives from those objects and the external world are regarded as at once a guarantee and a measure of the approval of the super-ego. It is here, too, that the mechanism of distributing the imagos is important; for while the ego turns away from the dangerous object, it tries to make good on the friendly one the imaginary injuries it has done.

The process of sublimation can now set in, for the restitutive tendencies of the individual towards his object are a fundamental motive force in all his sublimations, even his very earliest ones, such as quite primitive manifestations of the impulse to play.<sup>2</sup> A pre-condition for the development of restitutive tendencies and of sublimations is that the pressure exerted by the super-ego should be mitigated and felt by the ego as a sense of guilt. The qualitative changes which the super-ego begins to undergo as a result of the growing strength of the individual's genital impulses and object-relations cause it to behave in a different way to the ego, so that true feelings of guilt arise in the latter. But should such feelings become too overpowering they will once more affect the ego principally as anxiety.<sup>3</sup> If this line of thought is correct, then it would be not a deficiency in the super-ego but a qualitative difference in it that gives rise to a lack of social feeling in certain individuals, notably in criminals and so-called 'asocial' persons.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his paper, 'Über das Mitleid' (1930), Jekels shows that the person who feels compassion for his object treats it as he would like to be treated by his own super-ego.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art' (1929).

Ella Sharpe has shown that in sublimation the child projects its introjected parents on to an external object upon whom it gratifies its sadistic and restitutive tendencies and with whom it thus connects its feelings of magical omnipotence. (Cf. her paper, 'Certain Aspects of Sublimation and Delusion' (1930).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Ernest Jones's contribution to this subject, 'Fear, Guilt and Hate' (1929).

<sup>4</sup> In his paper, 'Identifizierung' (1926), Fenichel also takes this view.



In my view, in the earlier anal stage the child is making a defence against the terrifying imagos which it has introjected in the oral-sadistic phase. In ejecting its super-ego it is beginning to try to overcome its anxiety. But the attempt is not as yet successful, because the anxiety to be overcome is still too powerful and because the method of violent ejection continually arouses fresh anxiety. The anxiety which cannot be allayed in this way urges the child to cathect the next highest level of the libido—the later anal stage—and thus acts as a promoting agency in its development.

We know that in the adult individual super-ego and object by no means coincide; nor do they do so, as I have tried to show, at any time in his childhood. I believe that the efforts his ego makes, in consequence of this discrepancy, to make his real objects interchangeable with his imagos of them constitute a fundamental factor in his development.<sup>1</sup> The smaller the discrepancy is—the more his imagos approximate to his real objects as his genital stage takes the lead and the imaginary, terrifying imagos which have been taken over in the earliest stages of his life recede into the background—the more stable is his mental equilibrium and the more successful has he been in modifying his early anxiety-situations. As the genital impulses gradually gain in strength, the suppression of the id by the ego loses much of its violence, too, so that there is less friction between the two. Thus the more positive object-relationship which goes along with the advent of the genital stage may also be regarded as a sign of a satisfactory relation between super-ego and ego and between ego and id.

We have already been told that the fixation-points for the psychoses are to be found in the earliest stages of development and that the boundary between the earlier and later anal stage forms the line of demarcation between psychosis and neurosis. I am inclined to go a step further

<sup>1</sup> The importance of this factor for the development of the ego and for its relationship to reality is examined at greater length in Chapter X.

and regard those fixation-points as points of departure not only for subsequent illnesses but for disturbances which the child undergoes during the earliest stages of its life. In the last chapter we have seen that the too powerful anxiety-situations that arise in the phase of maximal sadness are a fundamental aetiological factor in psychotic disorders.<sup>1</sup> But in the earliest phases of their development normal children too, I have found, go through anxiety-situations which are psychotic in character. If, whether for external or internal reasons, those early situations are activated in a high degree, the child will exhibit psychotic traits.<sup>2</sup> And if it is too hard pressed by its fear-arousing imagos and cannot sufficiently counteract them with the aid of its helpful imagos and its real objects, it is exposed to disturbances which are similar to the psychosis of the adult and which are often prolonged into a regular psychosis in later life, or else form the basis of severe illnesses or other impairments of development.<sup>2</sup> But since in childhood anxiety-situations of that kind invariably come into operation at one time or another and reach a certain intensity, every child will at some time or other produce psychotic symptoms.

For instance, the change between excessive high spirits and extreme wretchedness, which is a characteristic of melancholic disorders, is regularly found in children. The real extent and depth of the unhappiness children feel is not taken into full account, just because it is of such frequent occurrence and undergoes such rapid changes. But analytic observation has taught me that their unhappiness and depression, though not so acute as the melancholic depression of the adult, have the same causes and can be accompanied by thoughts of suicide. The minor and major accidents that befall children and the hurts they do themselves are often, I have found, attempts at suicide, undertaken with as yet insufficient means. Then, too, they exhibit some

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929).

<sup>2</sup> The reader will recall the cases of Erna (Chapter III.), Egon (Chapter IV.) and Ilse (Chapter V.).



degree of that exclusion of reality which we take as a criterion of psychosis in the adult, though in their case we still look upon it as normal up to a point. Paranoid traits are much less easy to observe in them, from being associated with that secrecy and dissimulation which is typical of the disorder; and yet we know that small children feel themselves hemmed in and pursued by phantastic figures. In analysing some quite young children I have found that when they were alone, especially at night, the feeling they had of being surrounded by all sorts of persecutors like sorcerers, witches, devils, phantastic forms and animals<sup>1</sup> and their anxiety in regard to them had a paranoid character.

Infantile neuroses present a composite picture made up of the various psychotic and neurotic traits and mechanisms which we find singly and in a more or less pure form in grown-up persons. Sometimes the features of this disorder, sometimes of that, are more strongly emphasized; but in many instances the scene is completely obscured by the fact that the various affections, together with the defences employed against them, are all at work at the same time.

In his book, *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), Freud declares that 'the earliest phobias of children have so far found no explanation whatever', and that 'their relation to the later and obvious neuroses of childhood is in no way clear' (S.77). I believe that those early phobias contain anxiety arising in the early stages of the formation of the super-ego. The earliest anxiety-situations of the child appear round about the middle of the first year of its life and are brought on by an increase of sadism. They consist of fears of violent (*i.e.* devouring, cutting, castrating) objects, both external and introjected; and such fears cannot be modified in an adequate degree at such an early stage.

The difficulties small children often have in eating are also closely connected, according to my experience, with their earliest anxiety-situations and invariably have para-

<sup>1</sup> The child's belief in imaginary, helpful figures, such as fairies or Father Christmas, helps it to conceal and overcome its fear of its bad imagos.

noid origins. In the cannibalistic phase children equate every kind of food with their objects, as represented by their organs, so that it takes on the significance of their father's penis and their mother's breast and is loved, hated and feared like these. Liquid foods are likened to milk, faeces, urine and semen, and solid foods to faeces and other substances of the body. Thus food is able to give rise to all those fears of being poisoned and destroyed inside which children feel in relation to their internalized objects and excrements if their early anxiety-situations are strongly operative.

Infantile animal phobias are an expression of early anxiety of this kind. They are based on that ejection of the terrifying super-ego which is characteristic of the earlier anal stage, and thus represent a process, made up of several moves, whereby the child modifies its fear of its terrifying super-ego and id. The first move is to thrust out those two institutions into the external world and assimilate the super-ego to the real object. The second move is familiar to us as the displacement on to an animal of the fear felt of the real father. But before it there is often an intermediate step which consists of choosing as the anxiety-object in the external world a milder kind of animal in place of the wild and ferocious beasts which, in the earliest stages of ego-development, stood for the super-ego and the id. The fact that the anxiety-animal not only attracts to itself the child's fear of its father but also its admiration of him is a sign that the process of ideal-formation is taking place.<sup>1</sup> Animal phobias are already a far-reaching modification of the fear of the super-ego; and we see here what a close

<sup>1</sup> Abraham told me the following story as a good example of how a small child's hatred of an animal could already contain a fear of being reproved by it. He had given a picture-book to a small relative of his, a boy of not yet one and a half years of age, and was showing him the pictures and reading the text aloud to him. On one page there was a picture of a pig who was telling a small child to be clean. The words, and the picture too, obviously displeased the boy, for he wanted to turn the page over at once, and when Abraham later on returned to the picture he would not look at it. Later on Abraham learnt that though the boy was very fond of the picture-book he could not bear the page with the pig on it. In telling me this story Abraham added: 'His super-ego must at that time have been a pig'.



connection there is between super-ego, object-relationship and animal phobias.

In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* Freud writes: 'I thought at one time that a phobia had the character of a projection, in the sense that an inner instinctual danger was replaced by a danger perceived as coming from without. This brings with it the advantage that the subject can protect himself from external danger by running away from it or by avoiding the perception of it; whereas no flight can help against an internal danger. But this view, though not incorrect, is too superficial. An instinctual urge is after all not a danger in itself, but only in so far as it brings a real external danger with it, *i.e.* the danger of castration. Ultimately, therefore, a phobia is simply a matter of substituting one external danger for another' (S. 66, 67). But I venture to think that what lies at the root of a phobia is nevertheless an internal danger. It is the person's fear of his own destructive instinct and of his introjected parents. In the same passage, in describing the advantages of substitutive formations, Freud tells us that 'The fear belonging to a phobia is after all conditioned. It is only felt when the feared object is perceived, and rightly so, for it is only then that the danger-situation arises. There is no need to be afraid of being castrated by a father who is not there. But a father is something that cannot be got rid of. He appears whenever he wants to. But if the child replaces him by an animal, it has only to avoid the sight, *i.e.* the presence, of that animal to be free from danger and anxiety.' Such an advantage would be even greater if by means of an animal phobia the ego could not only bring about a displacement from one external object to another but also a projection of a much feared object, from which, because internalized, there was no escape, on to another, external one. Regarded in this light, an animal phobia would be much more than a mere distortion of the idea of being castrated by the father into one of being bitten by a horse or eaten by a wolf. Underlying it would be not only the fear of being castrated but a still earlier fear of

being devoured by the super-ego, so that the phobia would actually be a modification of anxiety belonging to the earliest stages.

As an illustration of what I mean let us take two well-known cases of an animal phobia—that of Little Hans and that of the Wolf Man. Freud has pointed out that in spite of certain similarities these two phobias differ from one another in many respects. As regards the differences, we observe that Little Hans's phobia contained many traits of positive feeling. His anxiety-animal was not a terrifying one in itself, and he felt a certain amount of friendliness towards it, as was shown by his playing at horses with his father just before his phobia came on. His relation to his parents and to his environment was on the whole very good; and his general development showed that he had successfully surmounted the anal-sadistic stage and attained the genital stage. His animal phobia exhibited only a few traces of that type of anxiety which belongs to the earliest stages, in which the super-ego is equated with a wild and terrifying animal and the child's fear of its object is correspondingly intense. In the main he seemed to have overcome and modified that early anxiety quite well. Freud says of him, 'Hans seems to have been a normal boy, with a so-called positive Oedipus complex',<sup>1</sup> so that his infantile neurosis may be regarded as a mild, even 'normal' one; his anxiety, as we know, was readily dissipated by a short piece of analysis.

The neurosis of the so-called Wolf Man, a four-year-old boy, presents quite a different picture. The development of this boy cannot be described as normal. To quote Freud again: '... an early seduction had disturbed his relationship to the female object. His passive feminine side was strongly accentuated, and analysis of his wolf-dream shows little intentional aggression against his father, whereas it brings forward quite definite evidence that what was repressed was a tender, passive attitude towards him. The first-mentioned factors may have played a part, but they

<sup>1</sup> *Hemmung Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 46.



are not observable.'<sup>1</sup> The boy's analysis showed that his idea of being devoured by his father was 'the expression, exposed to a regressive degradation, of a passive, tender desire towards his father aiming at being loved by him in a genital erotic way'.<sup>2</sup> Regarded in the light of our previous discussion, this idea is seen not only to express a passive tender yearning which has been degraded by regression, but, over and above this, to be a relic of a very early stage of development.<sup>3</sup> If we look upon the boy's fear of being devoured by a wolf not only as a substitute by distortion for the idea of being castrated by his father, but, as I would suggest, as a primary anxiety which has persisted in an unchanged form along with later, modified versions of it, then it would follow that there had been a fear of the father active in him which must have greatly helped to shape the course of his abnormal development. In the phase of maximal sadism ushered in by the oral-sadistic instincts, the child's desire to introject his father's penis, together with his intense oral-sadistic, hostile impulses, give rise to fears of a dangerous, devouring beast which he equates with his father's penis. How far he can succeed in overcoming and modifying this fear of his father will in part depend on the magnitude of his destructive tendencies. The Wolf Man did not overcome this early anxiety. His fear of the wolf, which stood for his fear of his father, showed that he had retained the image of his father as a devouring wolf in subsequent years. For, as we know, he rediscovered this wolf in his later father-imagos, and his whole development was governed by that overwhelming fear.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* S. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* S. 44.

<sup>3</sup> It seems to me important not merely from a theoretical point of view, but from a therapeutic one as well, to decide whether at the outbreak of the child's neurosis his idea of being devoured was receiving a regressive cathexis only, or whether it had retained its original activity side by side with later modifications; for we are concerned not only with the content of an idea but, above all, with the anxiety attached to it. We cannot fully understand such an anxiety, either in its quantitative or its qualitative aspect, until we have recognized it as an anxiety which underlies neurosis and is specific for psychosis.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ruth Mack Brunswick, 'A Supplement to Freud's "History of an Obsessional Neurosis"' (1928).

In my view, this enormous fear of his father was an underlying factor in the production of his inverted Oedipus complex. In analysing several highly neurotic boys, of between four and five years of age,<sup>1</sup> who exhibited paranoid traits and in whom the inverted Oedipus complex was predominant, I became convinced that this course of development was greatly determined by an excessive fear of their father, which was still active in the deepest mental layers and which had been generated by extremely strong primary impulses of aggression against him. Against a dangerous, devouring father of this sort they could not engage in the struggle which would naturally result from a direct Oedipus attitude, and so they had to abandon their heterosexual position. I think that the Wolf Man's passive attitude towards his father was founded on anxiety-situations of this order too, and that his sister's seduction of him merely served to strengthen and confirm him in the attitude to which his fear of his father had led him.

We are told that 'after the decisive dream he had been very naughty, and had tried to annoy everyone and behaved in a sadistic way', and that soon after he developed a genuine obsessional neurosis which turned out in analysis to be a very severe one. These facts seem to bear out my view that even at the time of his wolf phobia he was engaged in warding off his aggressive tendencies.<sup>2</sup> That in Hans's phobia his defence against the aggressive impulses should be so clearly visible while in that of the Wolf Man it should be so deeply concealed, seems to me to be explained by the fact that in the latter the much greater anxiety—or primary sadism—had been dealt with in a far more abnormal way. And the fact that Hans's neurosis showed no obsessional traits, whereas the Wolf Man quickly developed a regular obsessional neurosis, agrees with my idea that if obsessional features appear too

<sup>1</sup> My analyses of adults have corroborated these findings.

<sup>2</sup> In the last passage quoted above, Freud seems to leave open the possibility that a defence against sadistic impulses may also have played a part, though not a manifest one, in the structure of the Wolf Man's illness.



strongly and too early in an infantile neurosis we must infer that very serious disturbances are going on.<sup>1</sup>

In those analyses of boys on which my present conclusions are based, I was able to trace their abnormal development back to an over-strong sadism, or rather to sadism which had not been successfully modified and which had led to excessive anxiety in a very early stage of life. The result of this had been a very extensive exclusion of reality and the production of severe obsessional and paranoid traits. The reinforcement of the libidinal impulses and homosexual components that took place in these boys served to ward off and modify the fear of their father which had been aroused so early in them. This mode of dealing with anxiety is, I think, a fundamental aetiological factor in the homosexuality of paranoics,<sup>2</sup> and the fact that the Wolf Man developed paranoia in later life tends to support my view.<sup>3</sup>

In his *The Ego and the Id* (1923), in speaking about the love-relations of the paranoic, Freud seems to bear out my line of thought. He says: 'There is another possible mechanism, however, which we have come to know of by analytic investigation of the processes concerned in the change in paranoia. An ambivalent attitude is present from the outset and the transformation is effected by means of a reactive shifting of cathexis, by which energy is withdrawn from the erotic impulses and used to supplement the hostile energy' (p. 60). In the Wolf Man's phobia unmodified anxiety belonging to the earliest stages was clearly to be seen, I think. At the same time his object-relations were much less successful than those of Little Hans; and that his genital stage was weakly established and the influence of anal-sadistic impulses too strong was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VI. on this point.

<sup>2</sup> In Chapter III., in discussing a case with paranoid traits, I have tried to establish a similar theory of the origin of female homosexuality. The reader may also remember what was said in connection with Egon's analysis (Chapter IV.). I shall return to the subject in Chapter XII. Róheim comes to the same conclusion on the basis of his ethnological data (cf. his paper, 'Psycho-Analysis and the Folk-Tale', 1922).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ruth Mack Brunswick, *op. cit.*

evident from the severe obsessional neurosis that so soon made its appearance. It would appear that Little Hans had been better able to modify his threatening and terrible super-ego into a less dangerous imago and to overcome his sadism and anxiety. His greater success in this respect also found expression in his more positive object-relationship to both his parents and in the fact that in him the active and heterosexual attitude was the predominating one and that he had satisfactorily attained the genital stage of development.<sup>1</sup>

Let us briefly summarize what has been said about the evolution of phobias. In the suckling the earliest anxiety-situations find expression in as yet objectless phobias. In the earlier anal stage with its animal phobias there are in addition objects of an intensely terrifying nature. In the later anal stage, and still more in the genital stage, these anxiety-objects are greatly modified.

The process of modification of a phobia is, I believe, linked with those mechanisms upon which the obsessional neuroses are based and which begin to be active in the later anal stage. It seems to me that obsessional neurosis is an attempt to cure the psychotic conditions which underlie it, and that in infantile neuroses both obsessional mechanisms and mechanisms belonging to a previous stage of development are already operative.<sup>2</sup>

At first glance it would seem that this idea that certain elements of obsessional neurosis play an important rôle in the clinical picture presented by infantile neuroses is at variance with what Freud has said concerning the starting-point of obsessional neurosis. Nevertheless, I believe that the disagreement can be explained away in one important point at least. It is true that according to my

<sup>1</sup> In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926) Freud says: 'A case like Little Hans's does not help us to arrive at any decision. Here an aggressive impulse is dealt with by repression, it is true, but not until the genital organization has already been reached' (S. 65).

<sup>2</sup> Obsessional neurosis is only one of the methods of cure attempted by the ego in order to overcome this early infantile psychotic anxiety. Another method will be discussed in Chapter XII.



findings the origins of obsessional neurosis lie in the first period of childhood; but the isolated obsessional traits which emerge in that period are not organized into that whole which we regard as an obsessional neurosis until the second period of childhood, that is, until the beginning of the latency period. The accepted theory is that fixations at the anal-sadistic stage do not come into force as factors in obsessional neurosis until later on, as the result of a regression to them. My view is that the true point of departure for obsessional neurosis—the point at which the child de-

#### CORRIGENDUM

Page 226, par. 2. For the passage from 'Let us briefly summarize . . . to . . . anxiety objects are greatly modified' read 'Let us briefly summarize what has been said about the evolution of phobias. In the suckling the earliest anxiety-situations find expression in certain phobias. In the earlier anal stage, with its animal phobias, objects of an intensely terrifying nature are still involved. In the later anal stage, and still more in the genital stage, these anxiety objects are greatly modified.'

the obtrusion of other earlier disorders which have not yet been overcome and of the various defensive mechanisms that are still being employed against them.

Nevertheless, as I have tried to show, even quite young children frequently exhibit symptoms of a distinctly obsessional type, and there exist infantile neuroses in which a true obsessional neurosis already dominates the picture.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We shall consider these changes in greater detail in Chapter X., where I have tried to show that in the latency period the child is enabled by its obsessional neurosis to meet the requirements of its ego, super-ego and id, whereas at an earlier age, when its ego is still immature, it is not as yet able to master its anxiety in this way.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter VI., and also the case of Rita (Chapter III.), who came to analysis when she was two and three-quarter years old and already had a number of marked obsessional symptoms, chief among which were a complicated bed-ceremonial and an exaggerated love of order and cleanliness. The latter found expression in a great many habits that betrayed the obsessional bent of her character and the way in which it pervaded her whole personality. Moreover,

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Nevertheless, as I have tried to show, even quite young children frequently exhibit symptoms of a distinctly obsessional type, and there exist infantile neuroses in which a true obsessional neurosis already dominates the picture.<sup>2</sup>

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When this is the case it means that the early anxiety-situations are too powerful and have not been sufficiently modified and that the obsessional neurosis is a very grave one.

In thus distinguishing between the early emergence of single obsessional traits and, later, true obsessional neuroses I have, I hope, been able to bring the view put forward here concerning the genesis of obsessional neurosis more into line with the accepted theory. In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* Freud says that 'the point of departure of obsessional neurosis is the necessary defence against the libidinal demands arising from the Oedipus complex', and that 'the genital organization of the libido is a feeble one and has too little power of resistance. When the ego begins its defensive struggle, the first effect is to throw the genital organization (of the phallic stage) back, in part or altogether, on to the earlier anal-sadistic stage. This regression is decisive for everything which follows' (S. 47). If we regard as a regression that fluctuation between the various libidinal positions which is, in my opinion, a characteristic of the early stages of development and in which the already cathected genital position is continually being abandoned for a time until it has been properly strengthened and established, and if my contention that the Oedipus situation begins very early is correct, then the view here maintained about the point of departure of the obsessional neurosis would not only not be in contradiction with Freud's view as quoted above, but would go to bear out another suggestion of his which he has only put forward quite tentatively. He says: 'Perhaps regression is the result not of a constitutional factor but of a temporal one, and is made possible not because the genital organization of the libido is too weak but because the struggle of the ego has begun

these habits were already of long standing. Her bed-ceremonial, for instance, had begun some time in her second year and had steadily grown ever since.—Erna (Chapter III.), who came to me at the age of six, had certain obsessional symptoms which also went back to the end of her second year. In this very severe case the neurosis very early on showed many similarities with an adult obsessional neurosis.



too soon, while the sadistic phase is still at its height'.<sup>1</sup> In arguing against this idea he continues: 'Although I do not trust myself to make a definite pronouncement on this point either, I may say that analytic observation does not favour such a supposition. It tends to show that the individual does not enter upon an obsessional neurosis until after he has attained the phallic stage. Moreover, the age at which this neurosis breaks out is later than in hysteria, falling as it does in the second period of childhood after the latency period has set in. . . .'<sup>2</sup> These objections would in part be overcome if we adopt the view put forward here that obsessional neurosis has its point of departure in the first period of childhood but does not set in in its full form till the beginning of the latency period.

The view that obsessional mechanisms begin to come into action very early in childhood, towards the end of the second year, is part of my general thesis that the super-ego is formed in the earliest stages of the child's life, being first felt by the ego as anxiety and then, as the early anal-sadistic stage gradually comes to a close, as a sense of guilt as well. This thesis once more differs from orthodox theory. In the first part of this book I have given the empirical data upon which it is based; now I should like to adduce a theoretical reason in support of it. To turn to Freud once more. 'The motive force of all later symptom-formations', he writes, 'is here' (in obsessional neurosis) 'clearly the fear felt by the ego towards the super-ego.'<sup>3</sup> My contention that obsessional neurosis is a means of modifying early anxiety-situations and that the severe super-ego which figures in it is no other than the unmodified, terrifying super-ego belonging to early stages of the child's development, brings us, I think, nearer to a solution of the problem of why the super-ego should in fact be such a severe one in this neurosis.

The child's feelings of guilt which are bound up with

<sup>1</sup> *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 69.

its urethral- and anal-sadistic tendencies are derived, I have found, from the imaginary attacks it makes on its mother's body during the phase of maximal sadism.<sup>1</sup> In early analysis we get to know the child's fear of its unkind mother who demands back from it the faeces and children it has stolen from her. Thus the real mother (or nurse) who makes demands of cleanliness upon it becomes at once a terrifying person to it, one who not only insists upon its giving up its faeces, but, as its terrified imagination tells it, who intends to tear them by force out of its body. Another, yet more overwhelming, source of fear arises from its introjected imagos from whom, in virtue of its own destructive phantasies directed against external objects, it anticipates attacks of an equally savage kind inside itself.

In this phase, in consequence of likening excrement with dangerous substances which poison and burn and with weapons of offence of every kind, the child becomes terrified of its own excreta as something which will destroy its body. This sadistic equation of excreta with destructive substances, together with its phantasies of attacks undertaken with their help, furthermore lead the child to fear that attacks by similar means may be made against it both by its external and its internal objects and to feel a terror of excreta and of dirt in general. These sources of anxiety, all the more overwhelming because they are so manifold, are, in my experience, the deepest causes of the child's feelings of anxiety and guilt in connection with its training in cleanliness.

The child's reaction-formations of disgust, order and cleanliness arise, therefore, from the anxiety, fed from

<sup>1</sup> The generally accepted view, that what happens is that the sense of guilt which is aroused in the genital stage is associated by regression with training in cleanliness, does not take into account the severity of the feelings of guilt in question nor the closeness of their union with the pre-genital trends. The permanent impression made on the adult by his early training and the way in which it influences the whole of his later development—as we see over and over again in analyses of grown-up persons—points to the existence of a deeper and more direct connection between that early training and severe feelings of guilt. In his 'Psycho-Analysis of Sexual Habits' (1925) Ferenczi suggests that there is a more direct connection between the two and that there may be a kind of physiological precursor of the super-ego which he calls 'sphincter morality'.



various sources, which originates in its earliest danger-situations. Its reactive feelings of pity come more especially to the fore, as we know, at the beginning of the second anal stage, when its relations to its objects have developed. In this stage, moreover, as we have already seen, the approval of its objects is also a guarantee of safety and a safeguard against destruction from without and from within, and their restoration is a necessary condition for the intactness of its own body.<sup>1</sup> The anxiety belonging to the early danger-situations is, as I think, closely associated with the beginnings of obsessions and obsessional neuroses. It is concerned with manifold injuries and acts of destruction done inside the body, and therefore it is inside the body that restitution has to be made. But the child cannot know anything for certain about the inside of the body, whether its own or that of its objects. It cannot ascertain how far its fear of internal injuries and attacks is well founded, nor how far it has succeeded in making them good by means of its obsessional acts. The consequent state of uncertainty it is in becomes allied to, and increases, its intense anxiety and gives rise to an obsessive desire for knowledge. It tries to overcome its anxiety, whose imaginary nature defies critical inspection, by laying extra emphasis upon reality, by being over-precise, and so on. Thus we see that the doubt which results from this uncertainty plays a part not only in creating an obsessional character, but in arousing inclinations towards exactness and order and towards the observance of certain rules and rituals, etc.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The view that reaction-formations and feelings of guilt set in at a very early period of ego-development—as early as in the second year—is supported by Abraham in one or two passages. In his 'Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924) he says: 'In the stage of narcissism with a cannibalistic sexual aim the first evidence of an instinctual inhibition appears in the shape of morbid anxiety. The process of overcoming the cannibalistic impulses is intimately associated with a sense of guilt which comes into the foreground as a typical inhibitory phenomenon belonging to the third stage' (p. 496).

<sup>2</sup> In his 'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis' (1909) Freud remarks: 'The compulsion, on the other hand, is an attempt at a compensation for the doubt and at a correction of the intolerable conditions of inhibition to which the doubt bears witness' (p. 378).

Another element which belongs to the anxiety arising from early anxiety-situations and which has an important bearing on the character of obsessions is its intensity and multiplicity—multiplicity because of the many sources it springs from—which produce a correspondingly strong impulsion to set the defensive mechanisms in motion. The child feels urged to clean and put together in an obsessive manner whatever it has dirtied or broken or spoiled in any way. It has to beautify and restore the damaged thing in all manner of ways in accordance with the variety of its sadistic phantasies and the details contained in them.

The coercion which the obsessional neurotic often applies to other people as well is, I should say, the result of a manifold projection. In the first place he is trying to throw off the intolerable compulsion under which he is suffering by treating his object as though it were his id or his super-ego and displacing upon it the coercion they exercise upon him. In doing this he is, incidentally, satisfying his primary sadism by tormenting and subjugating his object. In the second place he is turning outward on to his external objects what is ultimately a fear of being destroyed or attacked by his introjected objects. This fear has aroused in him a compulsion to control and rule his imagos, and since he can never in fact do this he tries to tyrannize over his external objects instead.

If I am correct in my view that the magnitude and intensity of obsessional activities and the severity of the neurosis are equivalent to the extent and character of the anxiety arising from the earliest danger-situations, we shall be in a better position to understand the close connection which we know to exist between paranoia and the severer forms of obsessional neurosis. According to Abraham, in paranoia the libido regresses to the earlier of the two anal-sadistic stages. From what I have been able to discover I should be inclined to go further and say that in the early anal-sadistic stage the individual, if his early anxiety-situations are strongly operative, actually passes through rudi-



mentary paranoid states which he normally overcomes in the next stage (the second anal-sadistic one), and that the severity of his obsessional illness depends on the severity of the paranoid disturbances that have immediately preceded it. If his obsessional mechanisms cannot adequately overcome those disturbances his underlying paranoid traits will come to the surface, or he may even succumb to a regular paranoia.

We know that the suppression of obsessive acts arouses anxiety and that therefore those acts serve the purpose of mastering anxiety. If we assume that the anxiety thus overcome belongs to the earliest anxiety-situations and culminates in the child's fear of having its own body and that of its object destroyed in a number of ways, we shall, I believe, be better able to understand the deeper meaning of many obsessive acts. The compulsive accumulation of things and giving away of them becomes more intelligible as soon as we are able to recognize more clearly the nature of the anxiety and sense of guilt which underlie an exchange of goods on the anal level. In play analysis compulsive taking and giving back again finds very diverse expression. It occurs, together with anxiety and guilt, as a reaction to representations of acts of theft and destruction. Children will, for instance, transfer the whole or part of the contents of one box to another and carefully arrange them there and preserve them with every show of anxiety, and will—if they are old enough—count them over one by one. The contents are very varied and include burnt matches, whose ash the child will often go to the trouble of rubbing off, paper patterns, pencils, bricks for building, bits of string and so on. They represent all the things the child has taken out of his mother's body—his father's penis, children, pieces of stool, urine, milk, etc. He may behave in the same way with writing blocks, tearing out the leaves and preserving them carefully somewhere else. In consequence of his rising anxiety, putting back what he has symbolically taken out of his mother's body often does not satisfy his compulsion to give, or rather to restore. He is incessantly compelled,

in all sorts of ways, to give back more than he has taken, and yet in doing so his primary sadistic tendencies continually break through his reactive ones.

For instance, my little patient John, aged five, a very neurotic child, developed in this stage of his analysis a counting mania—a symptom which had not been much noticed, as it was such a usual occurrence at his age. In his analysis he used carefully to mark the position of his toy men and other playthings on a sheet of paper on which he had placed them, before transferring them on to another sheet. But he not only wanted to know exactly where they had been before, so as to be able to replace them in identically the same place; he would also count them over and over again in order to make sure of the number of things (*i.e.* the bits of faeces, his father's penis and the children) which he had taken (out of his mother's body) and which he had to give back. While he was doing this he would call me stupid and naughty and say: 'One *can't* take thirteen from ten or seven from two'. This fear of having to give back more than they possess is typical in children and can be explained partly by the difference in size between them and grown-up people and partly by the greatness of their sense of guilt. They feel that they cannot give back out of their own small body all that they have taken out of their mother's body which is so huge in comparison; and the weight of their guilt, which reproaches them ceaselessly with robbing and destroying their mother or both parents, strengthens their feeling of never being able to give back enough. The feeling of 'not knowing' which they have at a very early age adds considerably to their anxiety. This is a subject I should like to return to later on.

Very often children will be interrupted in their representations of 'giving back' by having to go to the lavatory to defaecate. Another small patient of mine, also a five-year-old boy, used sometimes to have to go to the lavatory four or five times during his hour at this stage of his analysis. When he came back he would count obsessively, in order to convince himself by getting up to high numbers



that he possessed enough to pay back what he had stolen. Viewed in this light, the anal-sadistic heaping up of possessions which seems to arise simply from the pleasure of amassing for its own sake takes on another aspect. Analyses of adults, too, have shown me that the wish to have ready a sum of money for any contingency is really a desire to be armed against an attack on the part of the mother they have robbed—a mother who was as often as not in point of fact long since dead—by being able to give her back what they have stolen. The fear of being deprived of the contents of their body compels them to be continually accumulating more money so as to have ‘reserves’ to fall back on. For instance, after John and I had agreed that his fear of not being able to give his mother back all the stool and children he had stolen from her was obliging him to go on cutting things up and stealing them, he gave me further reasons why he could not restore everything he had taken. He said that his stool had melted away in the meanwhile; that, after all, he had been passing it out all the time, and even if he were to go on and on making new bits he couldn’t ever make enough now. And, besides, he did not know if it would be ‘good enough’. By ‘good enough’ he meant in the first instance equal in value to what he had stolen out of his mother’s body. (Hence, by the way, his care in choosing the shapes and colours he used in his scenes of restitution.) But in a deeper sense it meant innocuous, free from poison.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, his frequent constipation was due to his need of storing up his faeces and keeping them inside so that he should not himself be empty. These many conflicting tendencies, of which I have only mentioned a few, aroused very severe anxiety in him. Whenever his fear was increased of not being able to produce the right kind of faeces or enough of them, or of not being able to repair what he had damaged, his primary destructive tendencies once more broke out in full

<sup>1</sup> In his paper, ‘Fear, Guilt and Hate’ (1929), Ernest Jones has pointed out that the word ‘innocent’ denotes ‘not hurting’, so that to be innocent means to do no harm.

force and he would tear, cut to pieces and burn the things he had made when his reactive tendencies were uppermost—the box which he had stuck together and filled up and which represented his mother, or the piece of paper on which he had drawn a plan of a town—and his thirst for destruction would be insatiable. His behaviour at the same time brought out to the full the primitive sadistic significance of urinating and defaecating. Tearing, cutting up and burning paper, wetting things with water, smearing them with ashes or smudging with a pencil—all these actions served the same destructive purposes. Wetting and smearing meant melting away, drowning or poisoning. Wet paper squashed into balls, for instance, represented especially poisonous missiles on account of being a mixture of urine and stool. The various details of his representations showed that the sadistic significance attached to urinating and defaecating was the most deeply seated cause of his sense of guilt and underlay that impulse to make restitution which found expression in his obsessional mechanisms.

The fact that an increase of anxiety will lead to a regression to the defensive mechanisms of earlier stages shows how fateful is the influence exerted by the overwhelmingly powerful super-ego belonging to the earliest period of development. The pressure exerted by this early super-ego increases the sadistic fixations of the child, with the result that it has constantly to be repeating its original destructive acts in a compulsive way. Its fear of not being able to put things right again arouses its still deeper fear of being exposed to the revenge of the objects whom, in its imagination, it has killed and who keep on coming back again, and sets in motion the defensive mechanisms that belong to its earlier stages; for the person who cannot be placated or satisfied must be put away. The weak ego of the child cannot come to terms with such a savage and menacing super-ego, and it is not until a rather more advanced stage has been reached that its anxiety is also felt as a sense of guilt and sets the obsessional mechanisms in motion. One



is amazed to discover that at this period of its analysis the child, in obeying its sadistic phantasies, is not only acting under an intense pressure of anxiety, but that the mastering of anxiety has become its greatest pleasure.

Directly the child's anxiety increases, its desire for possession is overshadowed by its need to have the where-withal to meet the threats of its super-ego and objects, and becomes a desire to be able to give back. But this desire cannot be fulfilled if its anxiety and conflict are too great, and so we see the very neurotic child labouring under a constant compulsion to take in order to be able to give. (This psychological factor, it may be remarked, enters into all the functional disturbances of the bowels that we meet with and into many bodily ailments as well.) Conversely, as the violence of its anxiety decreases, its reactive tendencies also lose their character of violence and compulsion and become steadier in their application and make their effect felt in a more moderate and continuous way with less liability to interruption from destructive tendencies. And now the child's idea that the restoration of its own person depends on the restoration of its objects comes out more and more strongly. Its destructive tendencies have not, indeed, become inoperative, but they have lost their character of violence and have become more adaptable to the demands of the super-ego. And though they enter into the reaction-formations themselves—into the second of the two successive stages of which the obsessional act is composed—they yield more easily to the guidance of the super-ego and ego and are at liberty to pursue aims sanctioned by those institutions.

There is, as we know, a close connection between obsessive acts and the 'omnipotence of thoughts'. Freud has pointed out that the primitive obsessive actions of backward peoples are essentially magical in character. He says: 'If not magical, they are at least contra-magical and are intended to ward off the expectation of evil with which the neurosis is wont to begin'; and again: 'The protective formulae of obsessional neurosis have their counterpart,

too, in magical incantations. In describing the evolution of obsessive actions we may note how they begin as magic against evil wishes, as far removed as possible from anything sexual, only to end up as a substitute for forbidden sexual activities which they imitate as faithfully as they can.<sup>1</sup> From this we see that obsessive acts are a counter-magic, a shield against evil wishes (*i.e.* death-wishes),<sup>2</sup> and at the same time sexual acts.

We should expect to find that these elements which have united in a defensive action would also be present in those phantasies and deeds which have aroused a sense of guilt in the first place and thus called that defensive action into being. A mixture of this kind of magic, evil wishes and sexual activities is to be found, I think, in a situation which has been described in detail in the last chapter—in the masturbatory activities of the infant. I pointed out there that the masturbation phantasies which accompany the beginning of the Oedipus conflict are, like the Oedipus conflict itself, completely dominated by the sadistic instincts, that they centre round copulation between the parents and are concerned with sadistic attacks on them, and that they thus become one of the deepest sources of the child's sense of guilt. And I came to the conclusion that it is the sense of guilt arising from destructive impulses directed against its parents which makes masturbation and sexual behaviour in general something wicked and forbidden to the child, so that its guilt is actually attached to its destructive instincts and not to its libidinal and incestuous ones.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Totem und Tabu* (1912), S. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the obsessional neurotic, Freud says, in *Totem und Tabu* (1912): 'And yet his sense of guilt is justified; it is based upon the intense and frequent death-wishes which are unconsciously being aroused in him against his fellow-men' (S. 145).

<sup>3</sup> In Chapter I. I have already pointed out the agreement between my own views on this subject and some conclusions that Freud has come to in his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). He says there: 'So then it is, after all, only the aggression which is changed into guilt, by being suppressed and made over to the super-ego. I am convinced that very many processes will admit of much simpler and clearer explanation if we restrict the findings of psycho-analysis in respect of the origin of the sense of guilt to the aggressive instincts' (p. 131). And again: 'One is now inclined to suggest the following statement as a possible



The phase in which, according to my view, the Oedipus conflict and its accompanying sadistic masturbation phantasies begin is the phase of narcissism—a phase in which the subject has, to quote Freud, ‘. . . a high estimation of his own psychic acts . . . what from our point of view is an overestimation of them’.<sup>1</sup> This phase is characterized by a sense of omnipotence on the part of the child in regard to the functions of its bladder and bowels and a consequent belief in the omnipotence of its thoughts.<sup>2</sup> As the result of this it feels guilty on account of the manifold assaults on its parents which it carries out in its imagination. But this excess of guilt which results from a belief in the omnipotence of their excrements and thoughts is, I think, one of the very factors which cause neurotics and primitive peoples to retain or regress to their original feeling of omnipotence. When their sense of guilt sets in motion obsessive actions as a defence, they will employ that feeling for the purpose of making restitution. But they now have to sustain it in a compulsive and exaggerated way, for it is essential that the acts of restitution they make should be based on omnipotence, just as their original acts of destruction were.

Freud has said: ‘It is hard to decide whether these first obsessive and protective actions follow the principle of similarity (or contrast), for within the framework of the neurosis they are usually distorted by displacement on to some trifle, some action which in itself is quite insignificant’.<sup>3</sup> Early analysis brings complete proof of the fact that the restitutive mechanisms are ultimately based on this principle of similarity (or contrast) both in degree and kind on every single point. If a child has retained very

formulation: when an instinctual trend undergoes repression its libidinal elements are transformed into symptoms and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt’ (p. 132).

<sup>1</sup> *Totem und Tabu* (1912), S. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Ferenczi has drawn attention, in his ‘Stages in the Development of a Sense of Reality’ (1913), to the connection between anal functions and the omnipotence of words and gestures. Cf. also Abraham, ‘The Narcissistic Evaluation of Excretory Processes in Dreams and Neurosis’ (1920).

<sup>3</sup> *Totem und Tabu* (1912), S. 108.

strong primary feelings of omnipotence in association with its sadistic phantasies, it follows that it will have to have a very strong belief in the creative omnipotence that is to help it to make restitution. Analysis of children and adults shows very clearly how large a part this factor plays in promoting or inhibiting such constructive and reactive behaviour. The subject's sense of omnipotence with regard to his ability to make restitution is by no means equal to his sense of omnipotence in regard to his ability to destroy; for we must remember that his reaction-formations set in at a stage of ego-development and object-relationship in which his knowledge of reality is in a much more advanced state. Thus where an exaggerated sense of omnipotence is a necessary condition for making restitution his belief in the possibility of being able to do so will be handicapped from the outset.<sup>1</sup>

In some analyses I have found that the inhibiting effect which resulted from this disparity between destructive powers and restitutive ones was reinforced by an added factor. If the patient's primary sadism and sense of omnipotence had been exceptionally strong his reactive tendencies were correspondingly powerful, and his phantasies of restitution were based on megalomaniac phantasies of great magnitude. In his childish imagination the havoc he had wrought was something unique and gigantic, and therefore the restitution he had to make must be unique and gigantic too. This in itself would be a sufficient impediment to the carrying out of his constructive tendencies (although it may be mentioned that two of my patients did undoubtedly possess unusual artistic and creative gifts). But side by side with these megalomaniac phantasies he had very strong doubts as to whether he possessed the omnipotence necessary for making restitution on this scale. In consequence he tried to deny his

<sup>1</sup> In a discussion on this subject Miss Searl pointed out that the child's impulse to restore things is also hindered by its early experience of the fact that it is easy to break things but exceedingly difficult to put them together again. Factual evidence of this kind must, I think, contribute to increase its doubts about its creative powers.



omnipotence in his acts of destruction as well. But every indication that he was using his omnipotence in a positive sense would be proof of his having used it in a negative sense and must therefore be avoided until he could bring forward absolute proof that his constructive omnipotence fully counterbalanced its opposite. In the two adult cases I have in mind, the 'all or nothing' attitude which resulted from these conflicting tendencies led to severe inhibitions in their capacity to work; whilst in one or two child-patients it helped severely to inhibit the formation of sublimations.

This mechanism does not seem to be typical for obsessional neurosis. The patients in whom I have observed it presented a clinical picture of a mixed type, not a purely obsessional one. In virtue of the mechanism of 'displacement on to trifles', which plays so great a part in his neurosis, the obsessional patient can seek in very slight achievements a proof of his constructive omnipotence and his success in making complete restitution. The doubts he may have on this head<sup>1</sup> are, in his case, an important incentive to repeat his actions in an obsessive way.

It is well known what close ties there are between the epistemophilic and the sadistic instincts. Freud writes,<sup>2</sup> 'the desire for knowledge in particular often gives one the impression that it can actually take the place of sadism in the mechanism of the obsessional neurosis'. From what I have been able to observe, the connection between the two is formed in a very early stage of ego-development, during the phase of maximal sadism. At this time the child's epistemophilic instincts are activated by its incipient Oedipus conflict and, to begin with, subserve its oral-sadistic trends.<sup>3</sup> It seems that their first object is the interior of its mother's body, which the child first of all regards as an object of oral gratification and then as the

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis' (1909), p. 376, Freud remarks that doubt is in reality a doubt of one's own love and that 'a man who doubts his own love may, or rather *must*, doubt every lesser thing'.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Predisposition to Obsessional Neurosis' (1924).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'Psycho-Analytical Studies on Character-Formation' (1925).

scene where coition between its parents takes place and where the father's penis and children are situated. At the same time as it wants to force its way into its mother's body in order to take possession of the contents and to destroy them, it wants to know what is going on and what things look like in there. In this way its wish to know what there is in the interior of her body is assimilated in many ways with its wish to force a way inside her, and the one desire reinforces and stands for the other. Thus the beginnings of the epistemophilic instinct become linked with the sadistic tendencies at their maximal strength, and it is easier to understand why that bond should be so close and why the epistemophilic instinct should arouse feelings of guilt in the individual.

We see the small child oppressed by a crowd of questions and problems which its intellect is as yet utterly unfit to deal with. The typical reproach, which it makes against its mother principally, is that she does not answer these questions, and no more satisfies its desire to know than she has satisfied its oral desires. This reproach plays an important part both in the development of the child's character and of its epistemophilic instincts. How far back such an accusation goes can be seen from another reproach which the child habitually makes in close association with it, viz. that it could not understand what grown-up people were saying or the words they used; and this second complaint must refer to a time before it was able to speak. Moreover, the child attaches an extraordinary amount of affect to these two reproaches, whether they appear singly or in combination; and at these moments it will talk in its analysis in such a way as not to be understood and will at the same time reproduce the reactions of rage which it originally felt at being unable to understand words.<sup>1</sup> It cannot put the questions it wants to ask into words, and would not be able to understand any answer that was given in words. But, in part at least, these questions have never

<sup>1</sup> My two-and-three-quarter-year-old patient, Rita, used to do this to me in her analysis (cf. Chapter II.).



been conscious at all. The disappointment to which the first stirrings of the epistemophilic instinct in the earliest stages of ego-development are doomed is, I think, the deepest source of severe disturbances of that instinct in general.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that it is in the first place sadistic impulses against its mother's body which activate the child's epistemophilic instinct. But the anxiety which soon follows as a reaction to such impulses gives a further very important impetus to the increase and intensification of that instinct. The urge the child feels to find out what is inside its mother's body and its own is reinforced by its fear of the dangers which it supposes the former to contain and also by its fear of the dangerous introjected objects and occurrences within itself. Knowledge is now a means of mastering anxiety; and its desire to know becomes an important factor both in the development of its epistemophilic instincts and in their inhibition. Anxiety plays the same rôle of a promoting and retarding agency here as it does in the development of the libido. We have had occasion in earlier pages to discuss some examples of severe disturbances of the epistemophilic instinct,<sup>2</sup> and have seen how the child's terror of knowing anything about the fearful destruction it had done to its mother's body in imagination and the consequent counter attacks and perils it was exposed to was so tremendous that it set up a radical disturbance of its desire for knowledge as a whole, so that its original, intensely strong and unsatisfied desire to get information about the shape, size and number of its father's penises, excrements and children inside its mother had gone over into a need to measure, add up and count things in a compulsive way.

As the libidinal impulses of children grow stronger and their destructive ones weaker, qualitative changes con-

<sup>1</sup> The hatred felt for people who speak another language and the difficulty experienced in learning a foreign language seem to me to be derived from these earliest disappointments of the epistemophilic instinct.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the cases of Erna (Chapter III.), Kenneth (Chapter IV.) and Ilse (Chapter V.).

tinually take place in their super-ego, so that it makes itself more and more felt by the ego as an admonitory influence. And, as their anxiety diminishes, their restitutive mechanisms become less obsessive in character and work more steadily and efficiently and with better results; and there emerge more clearly the reactions which we recognize as belonging to the genital stage. That stage would thus be characterized by the fact that in the interactions which take place between projection and introjection and between super-ego formation and object-relations, and which, to my mind, dominate all the early stages of the child's development, the positive elements have gained the day.



## CHAPTER X

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY ANXIETY-SITUATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EGO

ONE of the main problems presented by Psycho-Analysis is that of anxiety and its modification. The various psycho-neurotic illnesses to which the individual is liable can be looked upon as more or less unsuccessful attempts to master anxiety. But side by side with these methods of modifying anxiety, which may be considered as pathological, there are a number of normal methods, and they have an enormous importance for the development of the ego. It is to some of these that we shall turn our attention in the following pages.

At the beginning of its development the ego is subjected to the pressure of early anxiety-situations. Weak as it still is, it is exposed on the one hand to the violent urges of the id, and on the other, to the threats of a cruel super-ego, and it has to exert its powers to the utmost to satisfy both sides. Freud's description of the ego as 'a poor creature owing service to three masters and consequently menaced by three several dangers'<sup>1</sup> is especially true of the feeble and immature ego of the small child, whose principal task it is to master the pressure of anxiety it is under.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Ego and the Id* (1923), p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> In some extreme cases this pressure can be so forcible as to arrest completely the development of the ego. But even in less abnormal cases it can act not only as a promoting agency but as a retarding one in that development. In order for it to have a favourable effect, as in all developmental processes, a certain optimum relation between the co-operating factors is required.

In its play, even the quite small child will attempt to overcome its unpleasurable experiences. Freud has described how a small boy of one and a half tried to get over the unpleasurable event of his mother's temporary absence by throwing away a wooden reel tied to a piece of string so that it disappeared, and then pulling it back into sight again, and doing this over and over again.<sup>1</sup> Freud has recognized in this behaviour a function of general importance in the play of children. By means of it the child turns the experiences it has passively endured into an active performance and changes pain into pleasure by giving its originally painful experiences a happy ending.

Early analysis has shown that in play the child not only overcomes painful reality,<sup>2</sup> but is assisted in mastering its instinctual fears and internal dangers by projecting them into the outer world.<sup>3</sup>

The endeavour made by the ego to displace intrapsychic processes into the outer world and let them run their course there is allied to another mental function, one which Freud has made known to us in connection with the dreams of neurotics about the traumas they have experienced. He says: 'These dreams are attempts at restoring control of the stimuli by developing apprehension, the pre-mission of which caused the traumatic neurosis. They thus afford us an insight into a function of the psychic apparatus, which without contradicting the pleasure-principle is nevertheless independent of it, and appears to be of earlier origin than the aim of attaining pleasure and avoiding pain.'<sup>4</sup> The child's ever-renewed attempts to

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond the Pleasure-Principle* (1920), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> In the two previous chapters we have seen that in the earliest stages of the development of the individual his ego is not sufficiently able to tolerate his instinctual anxiety and his fear of his internalized objects, and tries to protect itself in part by scotomizing and denying psychological reality.

<sup>3</sup> Freud regards the origins of projection as a 'shaping of behaviour towards such excitations as bring with them an overplus of pain. There will be a tendency to treat them as though they were acting not from within but from without, in order for it to be possible to apply against them the defensive measures of the barrier against stimuli (*Reizschutz*). This is the origin of projection, for which so important a part is reserved in the production of pathological states' (*Beyond the Pleasure-Principle*, 1920, p. 33).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37.



master anxiety in its play also seem to me to involve a 'control of stimuli by developing apprehension'.<sup>1</sup> A displacement of this kind of instinctual and internal dangers into the outer world enables the child not only to master its fear of them better but to be more fully prepared against them.

The displacement of the child's anxiety arising from intra-psychic causes into the external world—a displacement which goes along with the deflection of its destructive instinct outwards—has the further effect of increasing the importance of its objects, for it is in relation to those objects that both its destructive impulses and its positive and reactive tendencies will now be activated.<sup>2</sup> Thus its objects become a source of danger to the child, and yet, in so far as they are felt to be kindly, they also represent a refuge from anxiety.

Besides the relief it gives by enabling internal instinctual stimuli to be dealt with as though they were external stimuli, the mechanism of projection, through displacing anxiety relating to internal dangers on to the outer world, affords additional advantages. The child's epistemophilic instincts, which, together with its sadistic impulses, have been directed towards the interior of its mother's body, are intensified by its fear of the dangers and acts of destruction which are going on there and inside itself and which it has no means of knowing about. But when the dangers it is exposed to are real and external, it is able to find out more about their nature and to know whether the measures it has adopted against them have been successful; and it thus has a better chance of overcoming them. This testing by reality which is so necessary to the child is a strong incentive for the development of its epistemophilic instinct as well as many other sorts of activity. In fact, I think we may

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the close relations between dreams and play, cf. Chapter I. of this book; as also my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929).

<sup>2</sup> In relating the incident of the child and the wooden reel Freud has interpreted its action of throwing away the reel as being the expression of sadistic impulses and of impulses of revenge. Its subsequent action of making the reel reappear (*i.e.* making its mother come back) was, I think, no less the expression of a magical restoration of the object (its mother) which it had symbolically killed by throwing it away.

say that all those activities which help the child to defend itself from danger, which disprove its fears and which enable it to make restitution to its object, have as their purpose the mastering of anxiety in regard to dangers both from without and within, both real and imaginary, no less than have the early manifestations of its impulse to play.

In consequence of the interaction of introjection and projection—a process which corresponds to the interaction of super-ego formation and object-relationship<sup>1</sup>—the child finds a refutation of its fears in the outer world, and at the same time allays its anxiety by introjecting its real, 'good' objects. Since the presence and love of its real objects also help to lessen the small child's fear of its introjected objects and its sense of guilt, its fear of internal dangers strengthens its fixation upon its mother and increases its need for love and help. Freud has explained that those expressions of anxiety in small children which are intelligible to us have ultimately only one cause—'the absence of the loved or longed-for person'<sup>2</sup>—and he traces that anxiety back to a stage in which the immature individual was entirely dependent on its mother. Being lonely without the loved or longed-for person, experiencing a loss of love or a loss of object as a danger, being frightened of being in the dark alone or with an unknown person—all these things are, I have found, modified forms of early anxiety-situations, that is, of the small child's fear of dangerous internalized and external objects. At a somewhat later stage of development there is added to this fear of the object a fear *on behalf* of it; and the child now fears that its mother will die in consequence of its imaginary attacks upon her and that it will be left all alone in its helpless state. Freud says, concerning this: 'It' (the infant) 'cannot as yet distinguish between temporary absence and permanent loss. Whenever its mother fails to appear it behaves as though it were never going to see her again; and only repeated experience teaches it

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter IX.

<sup>2</sup> *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 77.



that a disappearance of this kind is followed by her safe return.'<sup>1</sup>

According to my observations, the reason why the child needs to have its mother always with it is not only to convince it that she is not dead but that she is not the 'bad', attacking mother. It requires the presence of a real object in order to combat its fear of its terrifying introjected objects and of its super-ego. As its relationship to reality advances the child makes increasing use of its relations to its objects and its various activities and sublimations as points of support against its fear of its super-ego and its destructive impulses. It has already been said that anxiety stimulates the development of the ego. What happens is that in its efforts to master anxiety the child's ego summons to its assistance its relations to its objects and to reality. Those efforts are therefore of fundamental importance for the child's adaptation to reality and for the development of its ego.

The small child's super-ego and object are not identical; but it is continually endeavouring to make them interchangeable, partly so as to lessen its fear of its super-ego, partly so as to be better able to comply with the requirements of its real objects, which do not coincide with the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* S. 113. But the small child will only allow itself to be convinced by comforting experiences of this kind provided that its earliest anxiety-situations do not predominate and that in the formation of its super-ego its relations to its real objects are sufficiently brought into play. I have over and over again found that in older children also the absence of their mother reactivated the earliest anxiety-situations under whose pressure they had, as small children, felt her temporary absence as a permanent one. In my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929), I have reported the case of a boy of six who made me play the part of a 'fairy mother' who was to protect him against his 'bad' combined parents and kill them. I had, furthermore, to change over and over again from the 'fairy mother' to the 'bad mother' all at once. As the 'fairy mother' I had to heal the fatal wounds he had received from a huge wild animal (the 'bad' combined parents); but the next moment I had to go away and come back as the 'bad mother' and attack him. He said: 'Whenever the fairy mother goes out of the room you never know if she won't come back all of a sudden as the bad mother'. This boy, who had had an unusually strong fixation on his mother since his earliest years, lived in the perpetual belief that some harm had befallen his parents and his brothers and sisters. It came out that even if he had only just seen his mother the minute before he felt no security that she had not died in the meanwhile.

unrealistic commands of its introjected objects. Thus we see that on top of the conflict between the super-ego and the id and the opposition between the various requirements made by the super-ego itself, composed as it is of quite different imagos that have been formed in the course of development, the ego of the small child is burdened with this difference between the standards of its super-ego and the standards of its real objects, with the result that it is constantly wavering between its introjected objects and its real ones—between its world of phantasy and its world of reality.

The attempt to effect an adjustment between the super-ego and id cannot be successful in early childhood, for the pressure of the id and the corresponding severity of the super-ego absorb as yet the whole energy of the ego. When, at the onset of the latency period, the development of the libido and the formation of the super-ego have reached completion, the ego is stronger and can approach the task of making an adjustment on a broader basis between the factors concerned. The strengthened ego joins with the super-ego in setting up a common standard which includes above all the subjection of the id and its adaptation to the demands of real objects and the external world. At this period of its development the child's ego-ideal is the well-behaved, 'good' child that satisfies its parents and teachers.

This stabilization is, however, shattered in the period just before puberty and, more especially, at puberty itself. The resurgence of libido which takes place at this period strengthens the demands of the id, while at the same time the pressure of the super-ego is increased. The ego is once more hard pressed and finds itself faced with the necessity of arriving at some new adjustment; for the old one has failed and the instinctual impulses can no longer be kept down and restricted as they were before. The child's anxiety is increased by the fact that its instincts might now more easily break through in reality and with more serious consequences than in early childhood.

The ego, in agreement with the super-ego, therefore



sets up a new standard. This is that the individual should liberate himself from the original objects of his love. We see the adolescent often at odds with those around him and on the look-out for new objects. Such a need once again harmonizes to a certain extent with reality, which imposes different and higher obligations upon him at this age; and in the further course of his development this flight from the original objects leads to a partial detachment from personal objects in general and to the substitution of principles and ideals in their stead.

The final stabilization of the individual is not achieved until he has passed through the period of puberty. At the termination of this period his ego and super-ego are able to work together in creating adult standards. Instead of being dependent on his immediate environment the individual now adapts himself to the larger world about him, and acknowledges its claims, but as something that corresponds more to his own internal, independent and self-imposed standards which no longer show obvious signs of having been set up for him by his objects. An adjustment of this kind rests on his recognition of a new reality and is effected with the assistance of a stronger ego. And once more, as in the first period of expansion of his sexual life, the pressure arising from the menacing situation created by the exaggerated demands of the id on the one side and the super-ego on the other contributes much towards this strengthening of his ego. The contrary, inhibiting effect of such a pressure is seen in the fresh limitation of his personality, usually a permanent one, which overtakes him at the close of this period. The enlargement of his imaginative life which accompanies, though to a milder degree than in the first period of childhood, this second emergence of his sexuality is as a rule once again severely curtailed at the close of puberty. And we now have before us the 'normal' adult.

One more point. We have seen that in early childhood the super-ego and the id cannot as yet be reconciled with each other. In the latency period stability is achieved by

the ego and super-ego uniting in the pursuit of a common aim. At puberty, a situation similar to the early period is created, and this is once more followed by a mental stabilization of the individual. We have already discussed the differences between these two kinds of stabilization; and we can now see what they have in common. In both cases an adjustment is reached by the ego and super-ego agreeing upon a common standard and setting up an ego-ideal that takes into account the demands of reality.<sup>1</sup>

In the earlier chapters of this book I have tried to show that the development of the super-ego ceases, along with that of the libido, at the onset of the latency period. I would now like to emphasize as a point of central importance that what we have to deal with in the various stages that follow the decline of the Oedipus conflict are not changes in the super-ego itself but a growth of the ego, which involves a consolidation of the super-ego. The general process of stabilization which occurs in the child during the latency period is effected, I think, not by any actual alteration of its super-ego but by the fact that its ego and super-ego are pursuing the common aim of achieving an adaptation to its environment and adopting ego-ideals belonging to that environment.

We must now pass from our discussion of the development of the ego to a consideration of how this process stands in relation to that mastering of anxiety-situations which has been mentioned as such an essential factor in it.

I have said that the small child's play activities, by bridging the gulf between phantasy and reality, help it to master its fear of internal and external dangers. Let us take the typical 'mother' games of little girls. Analysis of normal

<sup>1</sup> In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926) Freud says: 'The ego controls the approach to consciousness and the translation of impulses into action in the external world; in its repressive function, it exercises its power in both directions'. On the other hand he says: 'We have shown its' (the ego's) 'dependence on the id and the super-ego and its helplessness and apprehension in the face of them' (S. 32). My theory of the growth of the ego is in agreement with these two statements, for it shows how the forces of the super-ego and ego react on each other and determine the whole course of the individual's development.



children shows that these games, besides being wish fulfilments, contain the deepest anxiety belonging to early anxiety-situations, and that beneath the little girl's ever-recurring desire for dolls there lies a need for consolation and reassurance. The possession of her dolls is a proof that she has not been robbed of her children by her mother, that she has not had her body destroyed by her and that she is able to have children. Moreover, by nursing and dressing her dolls, with whom she identifies herself, she obtains proof that she has a loving mother, and thus lessens her fear of being abandoned and left homeless and motherless. This purpose is also served to some extent by other games which are played by children of both sexes, as, for instance, games of furnishing houses and travelling, both of which spring from the desire to find a new home—*i.e.* to re-discover their mother.

A typical boys' game, and one which brings out the masculine components very clearly, is playing with carts, horses and trains. This symbolizes forcing a way into the mother's body. In their play boys enact over and over again, and with every kind of variation, scenes of fighting with their father inside her and copulating with her. The boldness, skill and cunning with which they defend themselves against their enemies in their games of fighting assure them that they can successfully combat their castrating father, and this lessens their fear of him. By this means and by repeatedly representing himself as copulating with his mother in various ways and showing his prowess in it, the boy tries to prove to himself that he possesses a penis and sexual potency—two things whose loss his deepest anxiety-situations have led him to await. And, since along with his aggressive tendencies his restorative ones towards his mother come out as well in these games, he also proves to himself that his penis is not destructive; and in this way he allays his sense of guilt.<sup>1</sup>

The intense pleasure which children who are not inhibited in their play get from games proceeds not only from

<sup>1</sup> This subject will be more fully discussed in Chapter XII.

the gratification of their wish-fulfilling impulses, but also from the mastery of anxiety which their games help them to achieve. But in my opinion it is not merely a question of two separate functions being carried out side by side; what happens is that the ego employs every wish-fulfilling mechanism to a large extent for the purpose of mastering anxiety as well. Thus by a complicated process which utilizes all the forces of the ego, children's games effect a transformation of anxiety into pleasure. We will examine later how this fundamental process affects the economy of the mental life and ego-development of the adult.

Nevertheless, as far as small children are concerned, the ego can only very partially achieve the aim of mastering anxiety by means of play. Their games do not completely help them to overcome their fear of internal dangers. Anxiety is always operative in them. As long as it is latent it makes itself felt as a continual impulsion to play; but as soon as it becomes manifest it puts a stop to their game.

With the onset of the latency period the child masters its anxiety better and at the same time shows a greater capacity to come up to the requirements of reality. On the other hand its games lose their imaginative content and their place is gradually taken by school-work. The child's preoccupation with the letters of the alphabet, arithmetical numbers and drawing, which has at first the character of play, largely replaces its games with toys. Its interest in the way in which letters are joined together, in getting their shape and order right and in making them of even size, and its delight in achieving correctness in each of these details, all flow from the same internal causes as its former activity in building houses and playing with dolls. A beautiful and orderly exercise-book has the same symbolic meaning for the girl as house and home, namely, that of a healthy, unimpaired body. Letters and numbers represent parents, brothers and sisters, children, genitals and excrements to her and are vehicles for her original aggressive tendencies as well as for her reactive ones. The refutation of her fears, which she formerly obtained from



playing with dolls and furnishing houses, she now gets by the successful performance of her school-work. Analyses of children in this period show that not only every detail of their book-work, but all their various activities in handicrafts, drawing and so on, are utilized in imagination to restore their own genitals and body, as well as their mother's body and its contents, their father's penis, their brothers and sisters, etc. In the same way every single item of their own or their doll's clothing, such as collars, cuffs, shawl, cap, belt, stockings, shoes, has a symbolic signification.<sup>1</sup>

In the normal course of their development the care which younger children lavish on the 'drawing' of letters and numbers is extended, as they grow older, to intellectual achievement as a whole. But even so, their satisfaction in such achievements is largely dependent on the appreciation they receive from the people about them; it is a means of gaining the approval of their elders. In the latency period, therefore, we see that the child finds a refutation of its danger-situations to a great extent in the love and approval of its real objects, and that it lays exaggerated stress upon those objects and upon its world of reality.

In the boy, writing is the expression of his masculine components.<sup>2</sup> His ability to write words and the stroke of the pen with which he forms his letters represent an active performance of coitus, and are a proof of his possession of a penis and of sexual potency. Books and exercise-books stand for the genitals or body of his mother or sister.<sup>3</sup> To a six-year-old boy, for instance, the capital letter 'L' meant a man on a horse (himself and his penis) riding through an archway (his mother's genitals); 'i' was the penis and himself, 'e' his mother's genitals and his mother herself, and 'ie' the union of himself and her in coitus.<sup>4</sup> The active

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (1930).

<sup>2</sup> In girls, too, writing and other activities of the kind are mainly derived from masculine components.

<sup>3</sup> In connection with his feminine components, his exercise-book stands for his own body, and the accomplishment of his school task an attempt to restore it.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. my paper, 'The Rôle of the School in the Libidinal Development of the Child' (1923).—Capitals and small letters generally stand for parents and children respectively.

copulation phantasies of boys come out also in active games and in sport, and we find the same phantasies expressed in the details of these games as in their lessons. The boy's wish to surpass his rivals and so to obtain an assurance against the danger of being castrated by his father—behaviour which corresponds to the masculine mode of dealing with anxiety-situations and which is of so much importance later on at the age of puberty—makes its appearance while he is still in the latency period. In general the boy is less dependent than the girl on the approval of his environment even in this period, and achievement for its own sake already plays a much greater part in his psychological life than in hers.

We have described the stabilization which takes place in the latency period as being founded upon an adaptation to reality effected by the ego in agreement with the super-ego. The attainment of such an aim depends upon a combined action of all the forces engaged in keeping down and restricting the id-instincts. It is here that the child's struggle to break itself of masturbation comes in—a struggle which, to quote Freud, 'claims a large share of its energies' during the latency period and whose full force is directed against its masturbation phantasies as well. And these phantasies, as we have repeatedly seen, not only enter into all its games as a child but into its activities in learning and all its later sublimations as well.<sup>1</sup>

The reason why, in the latency period, the child stands

<sup>1</sup> In my paper, 'The Rôle of the School in the Libidinal Development of the Child' (1923), I have discussed the unconscious significance of certain articles used at school and have examined the underlying causes of inhibitions in learning and in school life. In consequence of an excessive repression of its masturbation phantasies the child suffers from an inhibition of its imaginative life which affects both its play and work. During the latency period this inhibition is very conspicuous in the whole character of the child. In his *Frage der Laien-analyse* (1926) Freud writes: 'I have an impression that at the onset of the latency period they' (children) 'also become more inhibited mentally and stupider; many, too, lose some of their physical charm'. It is indeed true that the ego maintains its position of superiority over the id at great cost to the individual. In those periods of life when it is not so completely successful in subduing the id (*i.e.* during the first and second periods of sexual expansion) it enjoys a much fuller imaginative activity, and this expresses itself in an instability of mind on the one hand and greater richness of personality on the other.



in such great need of the approval of its objects is because it wants to lessen the opposition of its super-ego (which at this stage tends to adapt itself to its objects) to its desexualized masturbation phantasies. Thus in this period it has to fulfil the requirement on the one hand of giving up masturbation and of repressing its masturbation phantasies, and on the other of putting into effect successfully and to the satisfaction of its elders those same masturbation phantasies in their desexualized form of everyday interests and activities; for it is only with the help of such satisfactory sublimations that it can procure the comprehensive refutation of its anxiety-situations needed by its ego. On its successful escape from this dilemma will depend its stabilization in the latency period. Its mastery of anxiety is not achieved until it obtains the sanction of those in authority over it; and yet unless it has already obtained that sanction it cannot proceed to make the attempt.

This brief review of such very complicated and widely ramified processes of development must of necessity be a schematic one. In actual fact, the boundary between the normal and the neurotic child is not very sharply drawn, especially during the latency period. The neurotic child may be a good scholar; nor is the normal child always so very eager to learn, since he often seeks to disprove his anxiety-situations in other ways, for example, by displaying physical prowess. In the latency period the normal girl will often master her anxiety in pre-eminently masculine ways, and the boy can still be described as normal even though he chooses more passive and feminine modes of behaviour for the same purpose.

Freud has brought to our notice the typical ceremonials which set in in the latency period and which are a result of the child's struggles against masturbation.<sup>1</sup> He says that this period 'is furthermore marked by the erection of ethical and aesthetic barriers within the ego', and that 'the reaction-formations of obsessional neurotics are only normal

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 55.

character-formations carried to excess'.<sup>1</sup> Thus the line of demarcation between obsessional reactions and the characterological development expected of the normal child by his educational environment is, except in the most extreme cases, not easily fixed in children in the latency period.

It will be remembered that I have put forward the view that the point of departure for obsessional neurosis is situated in early childhood. But I have said that in this period of development only isolated obsessional traits crop up. They do not in general become organized so as to form an obsessional neurosis until the latency period sets in. This systematization of obsessional traits, which goes along with a consolidation of the super-ego<sup>2</sup> and a strengthening of the ego, is effected by the super-ego and ego on the basis of their erection of a common standard.<sup>3</sup> A standard thus upheld by both institutions is the keystone of their power over the id. And although the suppression of the child's instincts is undertaken at the instance of his objects and carried through to a large extent by his obsessional mechanisms, it will not be successful unless all the factors opposed to the id are acting in concert. In this comprehensive process of organisation, the ego manifests what Freud has called its 'inclination towards making a synthesis'.<sup>4</sup>

Thus in the latency period the requirements of the child's ego, super-ego and objects are united and find their common satisfaction in an obsessional neurosis. One reason why the strong aversion usually shown by grown-ups to a child's affects is so successful is because that aversion answers at this age to the child's own internal requirements.<sup>5</sup> And, again, we often find in analysis that a child

<sup>1</sup> *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926). S. 54.

<sup>2</sup> In this process the child's various identifications become more synthesized, the requirements made by its super-ego more unified and its internalized objects better adjusted to the external situation. Cf. also my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929).

<sup>3</sup> In *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 52, Freud says that in obsessional neurosis 'The ego and the super-ego have a large share in the formation of the symptoms'.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* S. 52.

<sup>5</sup> The child's environment can also directly affect its neurosis. In some analyses I have found that the favourable influence exerted on the patient by a change in



is being made to suffer and having conflicts set up in its mind because the people in charge of it have identified themselves too strongly with its naughty behaviour and aggressive tendencies. For its ego only feels equal to the task of keeping down the id and opposing forbidden impulses so long as its elders assist its efforts. The child needs to receive prohibitions from without, since these, as we know, lend support to prohibitions from within. It needs, in other words, to have representatives of its super-ego in the outer world. This dependence upon objects in order to be able to master anxiety is much stronger in the latency period than in any other phase of development. Indeed it seems to me to be a definite prerequisite for a successful transition into the latency period that the child's mastery of anxiety should rest upon its object-relations and adaptation to reality.

Nevertheless it is necessary for the child's future stability that this mechanism of mastering anxiety should not predominate to excess. If the child's interests and achievements and other gratifications are too completely devoted to its endeavours to win love and recognition from its objects, if, that is, its object-relations are the pre-eminent means of mastering its anxiety and allaying its sense of guilt, its mental health in future years is not planted in firm soil. If it is less dependent on its objects and if the interests and achievements by means of which it masters its anxiety and allays its sense of guilt are done for their own sake and afford it interest and pleasure in themselves, its anxiety will undergo a better modification and a wider distribution—will be levelled down, as it were. As soon as

the people about him was attributable to the fact that it had led him to exchange one set of symptoms, which had been very tiresome, for another which, though equally important in the structure of his neurosis, was less noticeable. Another thing which may make the child's symptoms disappear is an increase of his fear of his objects. I once had a boy patient, aged fourteen (cf. my paper, 'Zur Genese des Tics', 1925), who had done very well in his lessons at school but had been very inhibited in games and sport, until his father, who had been away for a long time, came home and brought pressure to bear on him to overcome his inhibition. The boy did in fact do so to some extent, out of fear of him; but at the same time he was overtaken by a severe inhibition in learning, which still persisted when he came to me for analysis.

its anxiety has thus been reduced, its capacity for libidinal gratification will grow, and this is a pre-condition for the successful mastering of anxiety. Anxiety can only be mastered where the super-ego and id have come to a satisfactory adjustment and the ego has attained a sufficient degree of strength.<sup>1</sup>

Since the mental support which even normal children get from their object-relations is so great in the latency period, we cannot always at the time detect those frequent cases in which they rely upon it too much. But in the period of puberty we can easily do so, for now the child will no longer be able to master its anxiety if its chief means of doing so is its dependence upon its objects. This is partly why, I think, psychotic illnesses usually do not break out till later childhood, during or after the age of puberty. But if we make our criterion of health not only an adaptation to the standards of this period of development but also the strength of the ego, based on a lessening of the severity of the super-ego and a greater degree of instinctual freedom, we shall not be in danger of overrating the factor of adaptability in the latency period as an indication of the successful development and real mental well-being of the child.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If due attention is paid to the indications, we shall be able to observe the beginnings of later illnesses and impairments of development much more clearly in the first period of childhood than in the latency period. In a great many cases of persons who have fallen ill at puberty or later, it has been found that they suffered from great difficulties in early childhood but were well adapted during latency, at which period they showed no marked difficulties and were amenable—often all too amenable—to their educational environment.—In cases where the anxiety belonging to the earliest stages is too intense or has not been properly modified, the process of stabilization in the latency period, which rests upon obsessional mechanisms, does not take place at all.

<sup>2</sup> If the requirements of the latency period have been too successfully imposed and the child's docility is too great, its character and its ego-ideals will remain in a state of subservience to its environment for the rest of its life. A weak ego—the result of maladjustment between super-ego and id—runs the risk of being unable to carry out the task of detaching the individual from his objects at the age of puberty and of setting up independent internal standards, so that he will fail from a characterological point of view. A lessened dependence upon its objects on the part of the child works in quite well with the educational demands made upon it at that time. In none of my latency-period analyses has a child become detached from its objects in the sense in which children at the age of puberty do. All that has happened is that its fixations become less strong and



Freud says that 'puberty marks a decisive period in the development of obsessional neurosis', and that at that time 'the aggressive impulses of the early period are reawakened on the one hand; and on the other, a greater or smaller proportion of the new libidinal impulse—in bad cases the whole of them—are driven to take the predestined path of regression and reappear as aggressive and destructive impulses. Owing to this disguising of the erotic impulses and to powerful reaction-formations in the ego, the battle against sexuality is now continued in the guise of an ethical problem.'<sup>1</sup>

In the boy, the erection of new idealized father-imagos and new principles, together with the heightened demands that the child makes upon himself help him to move away from his original objects. This results in his being able to take up his original positive attachment to his father and increase it, and in his running less risk of coming into collision with him. This event goes hand in hand with a dividing-up of the imago of his father. He can now love and admire his father's exalted imago and visit the very strong feelings of hatred he has at this period of his development on his father's bad imago—often represented by his real father or by a substitute such as a schoolmaster. In his relation to the admired imago he can satisfy himself that he possesses a powerful and helpful father, and can also identify himself with him, and thus fortify his belief in his own constructive capacities and sexual potency; while in his aggressive relation to the hated imago he proves to himself that he is his father's match and need not be afraid of being castrated by him.

It is here that his activities and achievements come in. By means of those achievements, whether in the physical

ambivalent. In this period of life, in becoming less dependent on its objects it becomes better able to find other objects, and thus prepares itself for the subsequent detachment it must make from its objects at puberty. Analysis does not increase but lessens the difficulties the child has in adapting itself to its environment and coming to terms with it; for the more internal freedom it has the better will it be able to do this.

<sup>1</sup> *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 56.

or the mental field, which call for courage, endurance, strength and enterprise he proves to himself, among other things, that the castration he dreads so much has not happened to him and that he is not impotent. His achievements also gratify his reactive tendencies and allay his sense of guilt. They show him that his constructive capacities outweigh his destructive tendencies, and they represent restitution done towards his objects. By giving him these assurances they greatly add to the gratification they afford him.<sup>1</sup> The allayment of his anxiety and sense of guilt, which in the latency period he has found in the successful pursuit of his activities in so far as they are made ego-syntonic by the approval of his environment, must in the period of puberty to a much greater extent come from the value which his performances and achievements have for him in themselves.

We must now give a brief consideration to the way in which the girl deals with her anxiety-situations at puberty. At this age she normally preserves the aims of the latency period and the modes of mastering anxiety that belong to it more strongly than the boy does. Very often, too, she adopts the masculine mode of mastering anxiety. We shall see in the next chapter why it is more difficult for her to establish the feminine position than it is for the boy to establish the masculine one. The erection of standards and ideals which takes place in the boy at puberty plays an important part in her development also, but it takes a more subjective and personal form and she sets less store by abstract principles. Her desire to please her objects extends to mental pursuits as well and plays a part even in her highest intellectual achievements. Her attitude to her work, in so far as the masculine components are not predominantly involved, corresponds to her attitude towards her own body; and her activities in relation to these two in-

<sup>1</sup> In many of his sublimations, particularly his intellectual and artistic efforts, the boy makes extensive use of the feminine mode of mastering anxiety. He utilizes books and work, in their significance of bodies, fertility, children, etc., as a refutation of the destruction of his body which, in the feminine position, he awaits at the hands of the mother who is his rival.



terests are largely concerned with dealing with her specific anxiety-situations. A beautiful body or a perfect piece of work provide the growing girl with the same counter-proofs as she had need of as a child—namely, that the inside of her body has not been destroyed by her mother, and that the children have not been taken out of it. As a grown woman, her relation to her child, which often takes the place of her relation to her work, is a very great help to her in dealing with anxiety. To have it and nurse it and watch it grow and thrive—these things provide her, exactly as in the case of the little girl and her dolls, with ever-renewed proofs that her possession of a child is not endangered, and serve to allay her sense of guilt.<sup>1</sup> The danger-situations, both great and small, which she has to deal with in the process of bringing up her children are calculated, if things go well, to supply an effective refutation of her anxiety. Similarly, her relation to her home, which is equivalent to her own body, has a special importance for the feminine mode of mastering anxiety, and has, besides, another and more direct connection with her early anxiety-situation. As we have seen, the little girl's rivalry with her mother finds utterance, among other things, in phantasies of driving her out and taking her place as mistress of the house. An important part of this anxiety-situation for children of both sexes, but more especially for girls, consists in the fear of being turned out of the house and being left homeless.<sup>2</sup> Their contentment with their own home is always partly based on its value as a refutation of this element in their anxiety-situation. It is indispensable to the normal stabilization of the woman that her children, her work, her activities, and the care and adornment of her person and home should furnish her with a complete refutation of her danger-situations.<sup>3</sup> Her relation to men,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the next chapter for a discussion of the more underlying factors in her relations to her child.

<sup>2</sup> The fear of becoming a beggar child or a homeless orphan appears in every child analysis. It plays a large part in fixating the child to its mother, and is one of the forms taken by its fear of loss of love.

<sup>3</sup> In some women I have been able to establish the fact that when they have completed their morning toilet they have had a feeling of freshness and energy

furthermore, is largely determined by her need to convince herself through their admiration of the intactness of her body. Her narcissism, therefore, plays a great part in her mastery of anxiety. It is as a result of this feminine mode of mastering anxiety that women are so much more dependent on the love and approval of men—and of objects in general—than men are upon women. But men, too, extract from their love-relations a tranquillization of their anxiety which contributes no little to the sexual gratification they get from them.

The normal process of mastering anxiety seems to be conditional upon a number of factors, in which the specific methods employed act in conjunction with quantitative elements, such as the amount of sadism and anxiety present and the degree of capacity possessed by the ego to tolerate anxiety. If these interacting factors attain a certain optimum, it appears that the individual is able to modify quite successfully even very large quantities of anxiety, to develop his ego in a satisfactory manner and even well above the average, and to achieve mental health. The conditions under which he can master anxiety are as specific as the conditions under which he can love, and are, as far as can be seen, very intimately bound up with them.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, best typified in the age of puberty, the condition for mastering anxiety is that the individual shall face especially difficult circumstances, such as give rise to strong fear; in others, it is that he shall avoid as far as he can—and even, in extreme cases, in a phobic way—all such circumstances. Between these two extremes is situated what can be regarded as a normal impulsion to obtain pleasure from the overcoming of anxiety-situations that are associated with not too much and not too direct (and therefore better apportioned) anxiety.

In this chapter I have tried to show that all the activities, interests and sublimations of the individual also serve to master his anxiety and allay his guilt, and that their motive

in contrast to a previous mood of depression. Washing and dressing stood for restoring themselves in many ways.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter XI.



force is not only to gratify his aggressive impulses but to make restitution towards his object and to restore his own body and sexual parts.—We have also seen<sup>1</sup> that in a very early stage of his development his sense of omnipotence is enlisted in the service of his destructive impulses. When his reaction-formations set in, this sense of negative, destructive omnipotence makes it necessary for him to believe in his constructive omnipotence; and the stronger his sense of sadistic omnipotence has been, the stronger must his sense of positive omnipotence now be, in order that he may be able to come up to the requirements of his super-ego in respect of making restitution. If the restitution required of him necessitates a very strong sense of constructive omnipotence—as, for instance, that he shall make complete restitution towards both parents and towards his brothers and sisters, etc., and, by displacement, towards other objects and even the entire world—then, whether he will do great things in life and whether the development of his ego and of his sexual life will be successful, or whether he will fall a victim to severe inhibitions, will partly depend upon the strength of his ego and the degree of his adaptation to reality which regulates those imaginary requirements, and partly upon whether the tasks laid upon him are too exacting and the discrepancy between his destructive and constructive omnipotence exceeds a certain limit.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up what has been said: We have tried to get some insight into the complicated process, involving all the energies of the individual, by means of which the ego attempts to master his infantile anxiety-situations. The success of this process is of fundamental importance for the development of his ego, and a decisive factor in securing his mental health. For with the normal person it is this manifold reassurance against his anxiety—a reassurance which is constantly being renewed and flows from many sources and which he derives from his activities and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter IX.

<sup>2</sup> In Chapter XII. we shall discuss a case in point.

interests and from his social relations and erotic gratifications—that enables him to leave his original anxiety-situations far behind and to distribute and weaken the full force of their impact upon him.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we must examine how the account given in these pages of the normal method of dealing with anxiety-situations compares with Freud's view on the subject. In his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (S. 89) he writes: 'During the course of development to maturity, then, conditions for anxiety must have been given up and danger-situations must have lost their significance'. This statement, however, is qualified by his subsequent remarks. After the sentence just quoted he goes on: 'Moreover, some of these danger-situations manage to survive into later periods by modifying their anxiety-conditions to suit the circumstances of later life'. I think that my theory of the modification of anxiety helps us to understand by what means the normal person gets away from his anxiety-situations and modifies the conditions under which he feels anxiety. For that even a wide removal from his anxiety-situations such as the normal individual achieves does not amount to a relinquishment of them, analytic observation strongly inclines me to believe. To all intents and purposes those anxiety-situations, it is true, have no direct effects upon him; but in certain circumstances such effects will reappear. If a normal person is put under a severe internal or external strain, or if he falls ill or fails in some other way, we may observe in him the full and complete operation of his deepest anxiety-situations. Since, then, every healthy person *may* succumb to a neurotic illness, it follows that he can never have entirely given up his old anxiety-situations.

The following remarks by Freud would seem to bear out this view. In the passage just quoted he writes:

<sup>1</sup> This mechanism of mastering anxiety plays a part in the most unimportant actions, so that the mere overcoming of everyday difficulties affords a person a means of mastering his anxiety of no small economic importance. And if he is neurotic he will often find such actions very burdensome and may be unable to perform them.



'The neurotic differs from the normal in that he exaggerates his reactions to these dangers. Even being grown-up offers no complete protection against the return of the original traumatic situation; for every one there must be a limit beyond which his mental apparatus cannot manage to master the quantities of excitation demanding discharge.'

## CHAPTER XI

### THE EFFECTS OF EARLY ANXIETY-SITUATIONS ON THE SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GIRL

PSYCHO-ANALYTIC investigation has thrown much less light on the psychology of women than on that of men. Since the fear of castration was the first thing that was discovered as an underlying motive force in the formation of neurosis in men, analysts naturally began by studying aetiological factors of the same kind in women. The results obtained in this way held good in so far as the psychology of the two sexes was similar but not in so far as it differed. Freud has well expressed this point in a passage in which he says: ' . . . and besides, is it quite certain that castration anxiety is the only cause of repression (or defence)? When we think of neuroses in women we must feel some doubts. True enough, a castration *complex* is always to be found in them; but we can hardly speak of a castration *anxiety* where castration is already an accomplished fact.' <sup>1</sup>

When we consider how important every advance in our knowledge of castration anxiety has been both for understanding the psychology of the male individual and for effecting a cure of his neuroses, we shall expect that a knowledge of whatever anxiety is its equivalent in the female individual will enable us to perfect our therapeutic treatment of her and help us to get a clear idea of the lines along which her sexual development moves forward.

<sup>1</sup> *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (1926), S. 63.



*The Anxiety-Situation of the Girl*

In my 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928) I have endeavoured to throw some light on this still unsolved problem and have put forward the view that the girl's deepest fear is of having the inside of her body robbed and destroyed. As a result of the oral frustration she experiences from her mother, the female child turns away from her and takes her father's penis as her object of gratification. This new desire urges her to make further important steps in her development. She evolves phantasies of her mother introducing her father's penis into her body and giving him the breast; and these phantasies form the nucleus of early sexual theories which arouse feelings of envy and hatred in her at being frustrated by both parents. (Incidentally, at this stage of development children of both sexes believe that it is the body of their mother which contains all that is desirable, especially their father's penis.) This sexual theory increases the small girl's hatred of her mother on account of the frustration she has suffered from her, and contributes to the production of sadistic phantasies of attacking and destroying her mother's inside and depriving it of its contents. Owing to her fear of retaliation, such phantasies form the basis of her deepest anxiety-situation.

In his paper on 'The Early Development of Female Sexuality' (1927), Ernest Jones gives the name *aphanisis* to the destruction of the capacity to obtain libidinal gratification of which the girl stands in dread; and he considers that this dread constitutes an early and dominating anxiety-situation for her. It seems to me that the destruction of the girl's capacity to obtain libidinal gratification implies a destruction of those organs which are necessary for the purpose. And she expects to have those organs destroyed in the course of the attacks that will be made, principally by her mother, upon her body and its contents. Her fears concerning her genitals are especially intense, partly because her own sadistic impulses against her mother are very

strongly directed towards her genitals and the erotic pleasures she gets from them, and partly because her fear of being incapable of enjoying sexual gratification serves in its turn to increase her fear of having her genitals damaged.

### *Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict*

According to my experience, the girl's Oedipus tendencies are ushered in by her oral desires for her father's penis. These desires are already accompanied by genital impulses. Her wish to rob her mother of her father's penis and incorporate it in herself is, I have found, a fundamental factor in the development of her sexual life. The resentment her mother has aroused in her by withdrawing the nourishing breast from her is intensified by the further wrong she has done her in not granting her her father's penis as an object of gratification; and this double grievance is the deepest source of the hatred the female child feels towards her mother as a result of her Oedipus tendencies.

These views differ in some respects from accepted psycho-analytical theory. Freud has come to the conclusion that it is the castration complex that introduces the girl's Oedipus complex, and that what makes her turn away from her mother is the grudge she bears her for not having given her a penis of her own.<sup>1</sup> The divergence between Freud's view and the one put forward here, however, becomes less great if we reflect that they agree on two important points—namely, that the girl wants to have a penis and that she hates her mother for not giving her one. But, according to my view, what she primarily wants is not to possess a penis of her own as an attribute of masculinity, but to incorporate her father's penis as an object of oral gratification. Furthermore, I think that this desire is not an outcome of her castration complex but the most fundamental expression of her Oedipus tendencies, and that consequently she is brought under the sway of her Oedipus

<sup>1</sup> 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1927).



impulses not indirectly, through her masculine tendencies and her penis-envy, but directly, as a result of her dominant feminine instinctual components.<sup>1</sup>

When the girl turns to her father's penis as the wished-for object, several factors concur to make her desire for it very intense. The demands of her oral-sucking impulses, heightened by the frustration she has suffered from her mother's breast, create in her an imaginary picture of her father's penis as an organ which, unlike the breast, can provide her with a tremendous and never-ending oral gratification.<sup>2</sup> To this phantasy her urethral-sadistic impulses add their contribution. For children of both sexes attribute far greater urethral capacities to the penis—where, indeed, they are more visible—than to the female organ of micturition. The girl's phantasies about the urethral capacity and power of the penis become allied to her oral phantasies, in virtue of the equation which small children make between all bodily substances; and in her

<sup>1</sup> In her paper, 'On the Genesis of the Castration Complex' (1924), Karen Horney has supported the view that what gives rise to the girl's castration complex is the frustration she has suffered in the Oedipus situation, and that her desire to possess a penis springs primarily from her Oedipus wishes and not from her wish to be a man. She looks upon the desired penis as a part of her father and as a substitute for him.

<sup>2</sup> In her *Zur Psychologie der weiblichen Sexualfunktionen* (1925), Helene Deutsch has pointed out that already very early on in her life the small girl, in taking her father as the object of her affections next in order to her mother, directs towards him a great part of that true sexual libido, attached to the oral zone, with which she has cathected her mother's breast, since 'in one phase of her development her unconscious equates her father's penis with her mother's breast as an organ for giving suck'. I also agree with the writer in her view that in this equation of the penis with the breast the vagina takes on the passive rôle of the sucking mouth 'in the process of displacement from above downwards', and that this oral, sucking activity of the vagina is implied by its anatomical structure as a whole (S. 54). But whereas according to Helene Deutsch these phantasies do not become operative until the girl has reached sexual maturity and has experienced the sexual act, in my opinion the early equation of the penis with the breast is ushered in by the frustration she has suffered from the breast in early childhood, and at once exerts a powerful influence on her and greatly affects the whole trend of her development. I also believe that this equation of penis and breast, accompanied as it is by a 'displacement from above downwards', activates the oral, receptive qualities of the female genital at an early age, and prepares the vagina to receive the penis. It thus clears the way for the little girl's Oedipus tendencies—though these, it is true, do not unfold their full power until much later—and lays the foundation of her sexual development.

imagination the penis is an object which possesses magical powers of providing oral gratification. But since the oral frustration she has suffered from her mother has stimulated all her other erotogenic zones as well and has aroused her genital tendencies and desires in regard to her father's penis, the latter becomes the object of her oral, urethral, anal and genital impulses all at the same time. Another factor which serves to intensify her desires in this direction is her unconscious sexual theory that her mother has incorporated her father's penis, and her consequent envy of her mother.

It is the combination of all these factors, I think, which endows her father's penis with such enormous virtue in the eyes of the small girl and makes it the object of her most ardent admiration and desire.<sup>1</sup> If she retains a predominantly feminine position, this attitude towards her father's penis will often lead her to assume a humble and submissive attitude towards the male sex. But it can also cause her to have intense feelings of hatred for having been denied the thing which she has so passionately adored and longed for; and if she takes up a masculine position it can give rise to all the signs and symptoms of penis-envy in her.

But since the small girl's phantasies about the enormous powers and huge size and strength of her father's penis arise from her own oral-, urethral- and anal-sadistic impulses, she will also think of it as having extremely dangerous attributes. This aspect of it provides the substratum of her terror of the 'bad' penis, which sets in as a reaction to the destructive impulses which, in combination with the libidinal ones, she has directed towards it. If her oral sadism is what is strongest in her she will regard her father's penis within her mother principally as a thing to be hated, envied and destroyed;<sup>2</sup> and the hate-filled

<sup>1</sup> She invests her mother with some of this glory and will in some cases only value her as the possessor of her father's penis.

<sup>2</sup> She will have the same attitude towards the children in her mother's body. We shall later on return to this subject and consider in what way her hostility to the children inside her mother affects her relations to her own brothers and sisters, to her own imaginary children, and, in after years, to her real ones.



phantasies which she centres upon her father's penis as something that is giving her mother gratification will in some cases be so intense that they will cause her to displace her deepest and most powerful anxiety—her fear of her mother—on to her father's penis as a hated appendage of her mother. If this happens, she will suffer severe impairments in her development and will be led into a distorted attitude towards the male sex. She will also have a more or less defective relationship to her objects and be unable to overcome, or overcome completely, the stage of partial love.<sup>1</sup>

In virtue of the omnipotence of thoughts the girl's oral desire for her father's penis makes her believe that she has in fact incorporated it; and now her ambivalent feelings towards it become extended to this internalized penis. As we know, in the stage of partial incorporation the object is represented by a part of himself or herself and the father's penis stands for his whole person. That is why, I think, the child's earliest father-imagos—the nucleus of the paternal super-ego—are represented by his penis. As I have tried to show, the terrifying and cruel character of the super-ego in children of both sexes is due to the fact that they have begun to introject their objects at a period of development when their sadism is at its maximum. Their earliest imagos assume the phantastic aspect which their own dominant

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido' (1924).—My patient Erna, whose case-history has been related in Chapter III., was a typical instance. Her father was in her eyes mainly the bearer of the penis which gratified her mother and not herself. It turned out that her penis-envy and her castration wishes, which were exceedingly strong, were ultimately based upon the frustration she had experienced in regard to his penis in her oral position. Since, in focussing her hatred on his penis, she imagined that her mother had possession of it, the feeling she entertained towards her mother, though filled with hatred, was a more personal one than what she felt for her father. It is true that another reason why she turned away from him was to protect him from her own sadism. And the concentration of her hatred on his penis also helped to make her spare him as an object (cf. Abraham in this connection). Analysis was able to bring out in her a more friendly and human attitude towards her father, and this advance was accompanied by favourable changes in her relations with her mother and her objects in general.—Concerning this relationship to the father's penis and the father himself, I should like to draw attention to the points of similarity that exist between my patient and two cases that Abraham has reported on p. 482 of his above-mentioned work.

pre-genital impulses have imparted to them.<sup>1</sup> But this impulse to introject the father's penis, that is, the Oedipus object, and to keep it inside is much stronger in the girl than in the boy. For the genital tendencies which accompany her oral desires have a receptive character too, so that under normal circumstances her Oedipus tendencies are to a far greater extent under the influence of oral incorporative impulses than are those of the boy. It is a matter of decisive importance for the formation of the super-ego and the development of the sexual life of both boys and girls whether their prevailing phantasies are those of a 'good' penis or of a 'bad' one. But again the girl, being more subordinated to her introjected father, is more at the mercy of his powers for good or evil than is the boy in relation to his super-ego.<sup>2</sup> And her anxiety and sense of guilt in regard to her mother serve to complicate still further her divided feelings about her father's penis.

In order to simplify our survey of the whole situation we will first of all follow out the development of the girl's attitude to her father's penis and then try to discover how far her relations with her mother affect her relations with her father. In favourable circumstances the girl believes in the existence not only of a dangerous, introjected penis, but of a beneficent and helpful one. As a result of this ambivalent attitude she will strive to counteract her fear of the introjected 'bad' penis by continually introjecting a 'good' one in coitus,<sup>3</sup> and this will be a further incentive to her to undergo sexual experiences in early childhood and to indulge in sexual activities in later life, and will add to her libidinal desires for a penis.

Moreover, her sexual acts, whether in the form of *fellatio*, *coitus per anum* or normal coitus, help her to ascertain

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> The girl's super-ego is consequently more potent than the boy's; and we shall later on discuss the effect this has upon her ego-development and object-relations.

<sup>3</sup> As we have already seen in an earlier part of this book, the child's fear of the 'bad' things inside itself, such as its internalized 'bad' objects, dangerous excrements and bodily substances, usually encourages it to try every kind of process of introjection and ejection and is thus a fundamental factor in its development.



whether the fears which play such a dominant and fundamental rôle in her mind in connection with copulation are well grounded or not. The reason why copulation has become fraught with so much peril in the imagination of children of both sexes is that their sadistic wish-phantasies have transformed that act, as done between their father and mother, into a very threatening danger-situation.<sup>1</sup> We have already gone into the nature of these sadistic masturbation phantasies in some detail, and have found that they fall into two distinct, though interconnected, categories. In those of the first category the child employs various sadistic means to make a direct onslaught upon its parents either separately or joined in coitus; in those of the second, which are derived from a somewhat later period of the phase of maximal sadism, its belief in its sadistic omnipotence over its parents finds expression in a more indirect fashion. It endows them with instruments of mutual destruction, transforming their teeth, nails, genitals, excrements and so on, into dangerous weapons and animals, etc., and pictures them, according to its own desires, as tormenting and destroying each other in the act of copulation.

Both categories of sadistic phantasies give rise to anxiety from various sources. Turning once more to the girl, we see that in connection with the first category she is afraid of being counter-attacked by one or both parents, but more particularly by her mother as the more hated one of the two. She expects to be assailed from within as well as from without, since she has introjected her objects at the same time as she has attacked them. Her fears on this head are very closely connected with sexual intercourse, because her primary sadistic actions have to a very great

<sup>1</sup> The child's wish that its parents should copulate in a sadistic way is in my experience an important factor in the production and maintenance of its sexual theories, so that the latter not only owe their character to the influence which its pre-genital impulses have upon the formation of its phantasies but are the result of the destructive wishes it directs against its copulating parents. In analysing the child's sexual theories, therefore, I have found it important from a therapeutic point of view to pay attention to the fact that they spring from its sadistic desires and so give rise to a strong sense of guilt in its mind.

extent been directed against her parents as she imagined them copulating together.<sup>1</sup> But it is more especially in phantasies belonging to the second category that copulation, in which, according to her sadistic desires, her mother is utterly destroyed, becomes an act fraught with immense danger to herself.—On the other hand, the sexual act, which her sadistic phantasies and wishes have transformed into a situation of such extreme danger, is for this very reason also the superlative method of mastering anxiety—the more so because the libidinal gratification that accompanies it affords her the highest attainable pleasure and thus lessens her anxiety on its own score.

These facts throw a new light, I think, on the motives which urge the individual to perform the sexual act and on the psychological sources from which the libidinal gratification he obtains from that act receives addition. As we know, the libidinal gratification of all his erotogenic zones implies a gratification of his destructive components as well, owing to the fusion of his libidinal and destructive impulses that has taken place in those stages of his development which are governed by his sadistic tendencies. Now, in my opinion, his destructive impulses have aroused anxiety in him as early as in the first months of his life. In consequence, his sadistic phantasies become bound up with anxiety, and this tie between the two gives rise to specific anxiety-situations. Since his genital impulses set in while he is still in the phase of maximal sadism—or so, at least, I have found—and copulation represents, in his sadistic phantasies, a vehicle of destruction for his parents, these anxiety-situations which are aroused in the early stages of his development become connected with his genital activities as well. The effect of such a connection is that, on the one hand, his anxiety intensifies his libidinal needs, and, on the other, the libidinal gratification of his various erotogenic zones helps him to master anxiety by diminishing his aggressive tendencies and with it his

<sup>1</sup> These phantasies also give rise to danger-situations which are not in themselves attached to the sexual act.



anxiety. In addition, the pleasure he gets from such gratification seems in itself to allay his fear of being destroyed by his own destructive impulses and by his objects, and to militate against his dread of *aphanisis* (Jones), *i.e.* his fear of losing his capacity to obtain sexual gratification. Libidinal gratification, as an expression of Eros, reinforces his belief in his helpful imagos and diminishes the dangers which emanate from his death-instinct and his super-ego.

The more anxiety the individual has and the more neurotic he is, the more the energies of his ego and his instinctual forces will be absorbed in the endeavour to overcome anxiety; and the more, too, will the libidinal gratification he obtains be employed for that purpose. In the normal person, who is further removed from his early anxiety-situations and has modified them more successfully, the effect of those situations upon his sexual activities is, of course, far less; but it is never entirely absent, I think.<sup>1</sup> The impulsion he feels to put his specific anxiety-situations to the test in his relations to his partner in love strengthens and gives colour to his libidinal fixations also, and the sexual act always in part helps him to master anxiety. And the anxiety-situations which predominate in him and the quantities of anxiety present are specific determinants of the conditions under which he is able to love.

If, in making the sexual act a criterion of her anxiety-situations and thus submitting them to a test by reality, the girl is supported by feelings of a confident and optimistic kind, she will be led to take as her object a person who represents the 'good' penis. In this case, the alleviation of anxiety which she obtains through having sexual intercourse will give her a strong enjoyment which considerably adds to the purely libidinal gratification she experiences and lays the foundations for lasting and satisfactory love relationships. But if the circumstances are unfavourable and her fear of the introjected 'bad' penis predominates, the necessary condition for her ability to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter X.

love will be that she shall make this reality-test by means of a 'bad' penis—*i.e.* that her partner in love shall be a sadistic person. The test she makes in this case is meant to inform her of what kind of damage her partner will inflict on her through the sexual act. Even her anticipated injuries in this respect serve to allay her anxiety and are of importance in the economy of her mental life; for nothing she may suffer from any external agency can equal what she is already suffering under the strain of her constant and overwhelming fear of phantastic injuries and dangers from within.<sup>1</sup> Her choice of a sadistic partner is also based upon an impulsion once more to incorporate a sadistic 'bad' penis (for that is how she views the sexual act) which shall destroy the dangerous objects within her. Thus the deepest root of feminine masochism would seem to be the woman's fear of the dangerous objects she has internalized, in especial her father's penis; and her masochism would ultimately be no other than her sadistic instincts turned inwards against those internalized objects.<sup>2</sup>

According to Freud,<sup>3</sup> sadism, although it first becomes apparent in relation to an object, was originally a destructive instinct directed against the organism itself (primal sadism) and was only later diverted from the ego by the narcissistic libido; and erotogenic masochism is

<sup>1</sup> The tendency the individual has to secure from the external world a tranquillization of his fears of imaginary dangers from within and from without is, I think, an important factor in the repetition-compulsion (cf. Chapter VII.). The more neurotic he is, the more this tendency will be coloured by his need for punishment. The conditions to which the securing of such a tranquillization from external sources is attached will be increasingly unfavourable in proportion as the anxiety connected with his early danger-situations is powerful and his optimistic trend of feeling weak. In extreme cases only very severe punishments, or rather unhappy experiences which he feels as punishments, are able to fill the place of the imaginary punishments which he dreads.

<sup>2</sup> In her paper, 'The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women' (1930), Helene Deutsch expresses views on the origins of masochism which differ widely from my own and which are based on the assumption, equally at variance with mine, that the Oedipus complex of the girl is introduced by her castration-wishes and castration-fears.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. his *Beyond the Pleasure-Principle*, 1920, and 'The Economic Problem in Masochism' (1924).



that portion of the destructive instinct which has not been able to be turned outward in this way and has remained within the organism and been libidinally bound there. He furthermore thinks that in so far as any part of the destructive instinct which has been directed outward is once more turned inwards and drawn away from its objects, it gives rise to secondary or feminine masochism. As far as I can see, however, when the destructive instinct has reverted in this way it still adheres to its objects; but now they are internalized ones, and, in threatening to destroy them, it also threatens to destroy the ego in which they are situated. In this way in feminine masochism the destructive instinct is once more directed against the organism itself. Freud says in his 'Economic Problem in Masochism' (1924): '... in the manifest content of the masochistic phantasies a feeling of guilt comes to expression, it being assumed that the subject has committed some crime (the nature of which is left uncertain) which is to be expiated by his undergoing pain and torture' (p. 259). There seem to me to be certain points in common between the self-tormenting behaviour of the masochist and the self-reproaches of the melancholiac, which, as we know, are in fact directed towards his introjected object. It would seem, therefore, that feminine masochism is directed towards the ego as well as towards the introjected objects. Moreover, in destroying his internalized object the individual is acting in the interests of self-preservation; and in extreme cases his ego will no longer be able to turn his death-instinct outwards, for both life and death-instincts have united in a common aim and the former has been withdrawn from its proper function of protecting the ego.

We will now briefly consider one or two other typical forms which may be assumed by the sexual life of women in whom fear of the introjected penis is paramount.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of course, these various forms overlap in many cases. In dealing with such a wealth and complication of material I can do no more than give a schematic account of one or two such forms, my main object being to describe a few of the consequences that arise from this most fundamental anxiety in the female individual.

Women who, besides having strong masochistic inclinations, are buoyed up by more hopeful currents of feeling, often tend to entrust their affections to a sadistic partner and at the same time to make endeavours of every kind—endeavours which often take up all the energies of their ego—to turn him into a friendly and ‘good’ person. Women of this kind, in whom fear of the ‘bad’ penis and belief in the ‘good’ one are evenly balanced, often fluctuate between the choice of a ‘good’ external object and a ‘bad’ one.

Not seldom the woman’s fear of the internalized penis urges her to be always renewing the process of testing her anxiety-situation, with the result that she will be under a constant compulsion to perform the sexual act with her object, or, as a variant to this, to exchange that object for another. In differently constituted cases, again, the same fear will have an opposite outcome and the woman will become frigid.<sup>1</sup> As a child, her hatred of her mother has made her view her father’s penis no longer as a desirable and bountiful thing but as something evil and dangerous, and has made her transform the vagina into an instrument of death and her mother into a source of danger to her father in his sexual relations with her. Her fear of the sexual act is thus based both on the injuries she expects to receive from the penis and on the injuries she will herself inflict on her partner. Her fear that she will castrate him is due partly to her identification with her sadistic mother and partly to her own sadistic impulses.

As we have already seen, if the girl’s sadistic tendencies are directed towards her internalized objects, she will adopt a masochistic attitude. But should her fear of the internal-

<sup>1</sup> Such an outcome depends greatly, it would seem, upon the extent to which the ego is able to overcome anxiety. As we learnt in the last chapter, it sometimes happens that the individual can master his anxiety (or rather, transform it into pleasure) only on condition that the reality-situations which he has to surmount are of a particularly difficult or dangerous nature. We sometimes find similar conditions laid down for his love-relations, in which case copulation itself represents the danger-situation. Hence frigidity in women would in part be due to a phobic avoidance of an anxiety-situation. As far as can be seen, there is a close relation between specific conditions of mastering anxiety and of obtaining sexual gratification.



ized penis impel her to defend herself against its threats from within by projection, she will direct her sadism towards the external object—towards the penis which is continually being introjected afresh in the act of coitus, and thus towards her sexual partner. In such cases, the ego has once more succeeded in turning the destructive instinct away from itself and from the internalized objects and in directing it towards an external object. If the girl's sadistic tendencies predominate, she will still regard copulation as a test by reality of her anxiety, but in an opposite way. Her phantasies that her vagina and body as a whole are destructive to her partner and that in *fellatio* she will bite off his penis and tear it to pieces are now the means of overcoming her fear of the penis she has incorporated and of her real object. In employing her sadism against her external object she is in imagination also waging a war of extermination against her internalized objects.

### *The Omnipotence of Excreta*

In connection with what has just been said we come to a factor which is of considerable importance for the development of the girl. In the sadistic phantasies of both boy and girl the excreta play a large part. The child's belief in the omnipotence of the function of the bladder and the bowels<sup>1</sup> is closely connected with paranoid mechanisms.<sup>2</sup> These mechanisms are in full swing in that phase in which, in its sadistic masturbation phantasies, the child destroys its copulating parents in secret ways by means of its urine, faeces and flatus;<sup>3</sup> and they become reinforced and employed in a secondary way for defensive purposes on account of its fear of being counter-attacked.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Freud, *Totem und Tabu* (1912); also, Ferenczi, 'Stages in the Development of a Sense of Reality' (1913), and Abraham, 'The Narcissistic Evaluation of Excretory Processes in Dreams and Neurosis' (1917).

<sup>2</sup> For the connection between paranoia and anal functions, cf. Freud, Ferenczi, Von Ophuijsen, Stürcke and others.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chapter X.

<sup>4</sup> Sadistic omnipotence of this kind, used primarily to destroy the parents or one of them by means of the excreta, becomes modified in the course of the

As far as I can judge, the girl's sexual life and ego are more strongly and permanently influenced in their development than are those of the boy by this sense of omnipotence of the function of the bladder and bowels. In children of both sexes the attacks they make with their excreta are levelled at their mother, in the first instance at her breast and then at the interior of her body. Since the girl's destructive impulses against her mother's body are more powerful and enduring than the boy's, she will evolve secret and cunning methods of attack, based upon the magic of excrements and other products of her body and upon the omnipotence of her thoughts, in conformity with the secret and hidden nature of that world within her mother's body and her own;<sup>1</sup> whereas the boy will concentrate his feelings of hatred not only on his father's penis, supposedly inside his mother, but on his real one, and thus directs them to a larger extent towards the external world and what is tangible and visible. He also makes greater use of the sadistic omnipotence of his penis, with the result that he has other modes of mastering anxiety as well,<sup>2</sup> while

child's development and is often employed to inflict moral pain on the object or to control and dominate it intellectually. Owing to this modification and because the child now makes its attacks in a secret and insidious fashion and has to display an equal watchfulness and mental ingenuity in guarding against counter-attacks of a corresponding character, its original sense of omnipotence becomes of fundamental importance for the growth of its ego. In his paper referred to above, Abraham takes the view that the omnipotence of the functions of the bladder and bowels is a precursor of the omnipotence of thoughts; and in his paper, 'The Madonna's Conception through the Ear' (1923), Ernest Jones has shown that thoughts are equated to flatus. I too think that the child equates its faeces, and more especially its invisible flatus, with that other secret and invisible substance, its thoughts, and furthermore that it imagines that in its covert attacks on its mother's body it has put them inside her by magic means. (Cf. Chapter VIII. of this book.)

<sup>1</sup> The fact that the woman attaches her narcissism to her body as a whole must be in part due to her connecting her sense of omnipotence with her various bodily functions and excretory processes, and thus distributing it to a greater extent over the whole of her body, whereas the man focusses it more upon his genitals. After all, in the last analysis it is through her body that she captures and controls her real objects by magic means.

<sup>2</sup> In this chapter and in the next we shall consider how the anatomical differences between the sexes contribute to separate the lines along which the sense of omnipotence and consequently the modes of mastering anxiety develop in each sex.



the woman's mode of mastering anxiety remains under the dominion of her relation to an inner world, to what is concealed, and therefore to the unconscious.<sup>1</sup>

As has already been said, when the girl's sadism is at its greatest height she believes that the sexual act is a means of destroying the object and that she is also carrying on a war to the knife against the internalized objects. She endeavours through the omnipotence of her excrements and thoughts to overcome the terrifying objects inside her own body and originally inside her mother's. If her belief in her father's 'good' penis inside her is strong enough she will make it the vehicle of her sense of omnipotence.<sup>2</sup> If her belief in the magical power of her excreta and thoughts preponderates, it will be through their power that she will in imagination govern and control both her internalized and her real objects. Not only do these different sources of magical power operate at the same time and reinforce one another, but her ego makes use of them and plays them off against one another for the purpose of mastering anxiety.

### *Early Relations to the Mother*

The girl's attitude to the introjected penis is strongly influenced by her attitude to her mother's breast. The first objects that she introjects are her 'good' mother and her 'bad' one, as represented by the breast.<sup>3</sup> Her desire to suck or devour the penis is directly derived from her desire to do the same to her mother's breast, so that the

<sup>1</sup> In my 'Contribution to the Theory of Intellectual Inhibition' (1931) I have shown that in his unconscious the individual regards his penis as the representative of his ego and his conscious, and the interior of his body—what is invisible—as the representative of his super-ego and his unconscious. (Cf. also Chapter XII. of this book.)

<sup>2</sup> In her paper, 'The Rôle of Psychotic Mechanisms in Cultural Development' (1930), Melitta Schmideberg has shown that the introjection of his father's penis (= his father) greatly enhances the individual's narcissism and sense of omnipotence.

<sup>3</sup> In Chapter VIII. we saw how the 'good' breast becomes turned into a 'bad' one in consequence of the child's imaginary attacks upon it (for the child directs all the resources of its sadism in the first instance against the breast for not giving it enough gratification), so that a primary introjection of both a good and a bad mother-*imago* takes place before any other *imagos* are formed.

frustration she suffers from the breast prepares the way for the feelings which her later frustration in regard to the penis arouse. Not only do the envy and hatred she feels towards her mother colour and intensify her sadistic phantasies against the penis, but her relations to the mother's breast affect her subsequent attitude towards men in other ways as well. As soon as she begins to be afraid of the 'bad' introjected penis she also begins to run back to her mother, from whom, both as a real person and as an introjected figure, she hopes for assistance. If her primary attitude to her mother has been governed by the oral-sucking position, so that it contains strong currents of positive and optimistic feeling, she will be able to take shelter to some extent behind her good mother-imago against her bad mother-imago and against the 'bad' penis; if not, her fear of her introjected mother will increase her fear of the internalized penis and of her terrifying parents united in copulation.

The importance which the girl's mother-imago has for her as a 'helping' figure and the strength of her attachment to her mother are very great, since in her imagination her mother is the possessor of the nourishing breast and the father's penis and children and thus has the power to gratify all her needs. For when the small girl's early anxiety-situations set in, her ego makes use of her need for nourishment in the widest sense to assist her in overcoming anxiety. The more she is afraid that her body is poisoned and exposed to attack, the more she craves for the 'good' milk, 'good' penis and children<sup>1</sup> over which she believes her mother has unlimited command. She needs these 'good' things to protect her against the 'bad' ones, and to establish a kind of equilibrium inside her. In her imagination her mother's body is therefore a kind of store-house which contains the gratification of all her desires and the appeasement of all her fears. It is these phantasies,

<sup>1</sup> We shall presently enquire in greater detail into the deeper significance attached to the possession of children. It suffices here to remark that the imaginary child inside the body represents a helpful object.



leading back to her mother's breast as her earliest source of gratification and as the one most fraught with consequences, which are responsible for her immensely strong attachment to her mother. And the frustration she suffers from her mother in this connection causes her, under the rising pressure of her anxiety, to feel renewed resentment against her and to redouble her sadistic attacks upon her body.

At a somewhat later stage of her development, however, at a time when her sense of guilt is making itself felt in every quarter,<sup>1</sup> this very desire to get hold of the 'good' contents of her mother's body, or rather her conviction that she has done so and thus exposed her mother, as it were, to its 'bad' contents, arouses a most severe sense of guilt and anxiety in her. In having thus destroyed her mother she has, she believes, completely demolished that reservoir from which she draws the satisfaction of all her moral and physical needs. This fear, which is of such tremendous importance in the mental life of the small girl, goes to strengthen still further the ties that bind her to her mother. It gives rise to an impulsion to make restitution and give her mother back all that she has taken from her—an impulsion which finds expression in numerous sublimations of a specifically feminine kind.

But this impulsion runs counter to another impulsion, itself stimulated by the same fear, to take away everything her mother has got so as to save her own body. At this stage of her development, therefore, the girl is governed by a compulsion both to take away and to give back, and this compulsion, as has elsewhere been said,<sup>2</sup> is important in the aetiology of obsessional neurosis in general. For instance, we see small children drawing little stars or crosses, which signify faeces and children, or older ones writing letters and numbers, on a sheet of paper that stands

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that in her imagination, besides having attacked her parents, the girl has injured or killed her brothers and sisters inside her mother. Her fear of retaliation and her sense of guilt on account of this give rise to disturbances in her relation to her real brothers and sisters and consequently in her capacity for social adaptation in general.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter IX.

for their mother's body or their own, and taking great care to leave no empty spaces. Or else they will pile up pieces of paper neatly in a box until it is quite full. Very frequently they will draw a house to represent their mother, and then put a tree in front of it for their father's penis and some flowers beside it for children. Older girls will draw or sew or make dolls and dolls' dresses or books, etc.; and these things typify their mother's reconstituted body (either as a whole or each damaged part individually), their father's penis and the children inside her, or their father and brothers and sisters in person.

While they are engaged in these activities or after they have completed them, children will often show rage, depression or disappointment, or even reactions of a destructive kind. Anxiety of this kind, which is an underlying obstacle to all constructive tendencies, arises from various sources.<sup>1</sup> The girl has in imagination taken possession of her father's penis and faeces and children, and then, owing to the fear of penis, children and excrements that sets in with her sadistic phantasies, she loses faith in their rightness. The questions in her mind now are: will the things she gives back to her mother be 'good', and can she give them back properly as regards quality and quantity and even as regards the order in which they should be arranged inside (for that, too, is a necessary part of the act of restitution)? Again, if she does believe that she has well and duly given her mother back the 'good' contents of her body she becomes afraid of having endangered her own person by so doing.

These sources of anxiety give rise, furthermore, to a special attitude of distrust in the girl towards her mother. On entering my room many of my girl patients will look suspiciously at the stock of paper and pencils in the drawer reserved for them, in case they should not belong to them or be smaller in size or fewer in number than on the day

<sup>1</sup> If anxiety is so strong that it cannot be bound by obsessional mechanisms, the violent mechanisms belonging to earlier stages will be brought into play, together with the more primitive defensive mechanisms employed by the ego.



before; or they will want to make sure that the contents of their drawer have not been disarranged, and that all is in good order and no article is missing or exchanged for something else.<sup>1</sup> From time to time they will wrap up their drawings or paper patterns, or whatever is symbolizing the penis or children for them at the time, tie them up and carefully deposit them in their drawer of toys, with every sign of the deepest suspicion towards me. On these occasions I am not allowed to come near the parcel or even the drawer and must move away or not look on while it is being done up. Analysis shows that the drawer and the parcels inside represent their own body and that they are afraid not only that their mother will attack and despoil it but will put 'bad' things inside it in exchange for the 'good' ones.

In addition to these many sources of anxiety the girl child is under certain further disabilities compared to the boy, owing to physiological reasons. Her feminine position gives her no support against her anxiety,<sup>2</sup> since her possession of children, which would be a complete confirmation and fulfilment of that position, is, after all, only a prospective one.<sup>3</sup> Nor does the structure of her body afford her any possibility of knowing what the actual state of affairs inside her is; whereas the boy finds support in his masculine position, for, thanks to his possession of a penis, he has the means of convincing himself by a reality-test that all is well within. It is this inability to know anything about her condition which aggravates what, in my opinion, is the girl's deepest fear—namely, that the inside of her body has been injured or destroyed and that she has got no children or only damaged ones.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I may mention that each child has a drawer of its own in which the toys, paper and pencils, etc., which I put out for it at the beginning of its hour and renew from time to time, are put away, together with the things it brings from home.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

<sup>3</sup> In her paper, 'The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women' (1930), Helene Deutsch points out this fact as an obstacle to the maintenance of the feminine position.

<sup>4</sup> This is partly the reason why female narcissism extends over the whole body. Male narcissism is focussed upon the penis because the boy's chief fear is of being castrated.

*The Rôle of the Vagina in Infantile Sexuality*

The fact that the female child's anxiety concerns the inside of her body explains to a large extent, I think, why in her early sexual organization the part played by the vagina should be overshadowed by the activity of the clitoris. In her very earliest masturbation phantasies, in which she transforms her mother's vagina into an instrument of destruction, she shows an unconscious knowledge about the vagina. For although, owing to the predominance of her oral and anal tendencies, she likens it to the mouth and to the anus, she nevertheless thinks of it in her unconscious, as many details of her phantasies clearly demonstrate, as a cavity in the genitals which is meant to receive her father's penis.

But besides this general unconscious realization of the existence of the vagina the small girl often possesses a quite conscious knowledge of it. Analysis of a number of small girls has convinced me that, in addition to those quite special cases mentioned by Helene Deutsch<sup>1</sup> in which the patient has undergone sexual assault and defloration and has in consequence obtained a knowledge of this sort and been led to indulge in vaginal masturbation, many small girls are consciously aware that they have an opening in their genitals. In some instances they have got this knowledge from mutual investigations made during sexual games with other children, whether boys or girls; in others, they have discovered the vagina for themselves. They undoubtedly have a specially strong inclination to deny or repress such knowledge—an inclination which springs from the anxiety they feel in regard to this organ and to the inside of their body. Analyses of women have shown that the fact that the vagina is a part of the interior of their body, to which so much of their deepest anxiety is attached, and that it is the organ which they regard as pre-eminently dangerous and endangered in their sadistic phantasies about copulation between their parents, is of fundamental

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*



importance in giving rise to sexual disturbances and frigidity in them and, in particular, in inhibiting vaginal excitability.

There is a good deal of evidence to show that the vagina does not enter upon its full functions until the sexual act has been performed.<sup>1</sup> And, as we know, it often happens that the woman's attitude to copulation is completely altered after she has experienced it and that her inhibition in regard to it—and, before the event, such an inhibition is so usual as to be practically normal—is often replaced by a strong desire for it. We may infer from this that her previous inhibition was in part maintained by anxiety and that the sexual act has removed that anxiety.<sup>2</sup> I should be inclined to attribute this reassuring effect of sexual intercourse to the fact that the libidinal gratification which she receives from copulation confirms her in the belief that the penis she has incorporated during the act is a 'good' object and that her vagina does not have a destructive effect upon it. Her fear of the internalized and external penis—a fear which has been all the greater from being unverifiable—is thus removed by the real object. In my view, the girl's fears concerning the inside of her body contribute, in addition to the operation of biological factors, to prevent the emergence of a clearly discernible vaginal phase in her early childhood. Nevertheless I am convinced, on the strength of a number of analyses of small girls, that the psychological representatives of the vagina exert their full share of influence, no less than the psychological representatives of all the other libidinal phases, upon the infantile genital organization of the female child.

The same factors which tend to conceal the psychological function of the vagina in the girl go to intensify her fixation on the clitoris. For the latter is a visible organ and one which can be submitted to reality tests. I have found that clitoral masturbation is accompanied by phantasies of

<sup>1</sup> Helene Deutsch supports this view in her book, *Zur Psychologie der weiblichen Sexualfunktionen* (1925).

<sup>2</sup> We have already considered the structure of those cases in which the sexual act fails to reduce anxiety and even increases it.

various descriptions. Their content changes extremely rapidly, in accordance with the violent fluctuations which take place between one position and another in the early stages of the girl's development. They are at first for the most part of a pre-genital kind; but as soon as the girl's desires to incorporate her father's penis in an oral and genital manner grow stronger they assume a genital and vaginal character (being often already accompanied, it would seem, by vaginal sensations) and thus, to begin with, take a feminine direction.<sup>1</sup>

Since the little girl begins to identify herself with her father very soon after she has identified herself with her mother, her clitoris rapidly takes on the significance of a penis in her masturbation phantasies. All her clitoral masturbation phantasies belonging to this early stage are governed by her sadistic tendencies, and that is why, I think, they, and her masturbatory activities in general, diminish or cease altogether when her phallic phase comes to an end, at a period when her sense of guilt emerges more strongly. Her realization of the fact that her clitoris is no substitute for the penis she desires is, in my opinion, only the last link in a chain of events which orders her future life and in many cases condemns her to frigidity for the rest of her days.

### *The Castration Complex*

The identification with her father which the girl displays so clearly in the phallic phase, and which bears every sign of penis-envy and castration complex,<sup>2</sup> is, as far as my own observations go, the outcome of a process comprising many steps.<sup>3</sup> In examining some of the more important of

<sup>1</sup> In his paper, 'One of the Motive Factors in the Formation of the Super-Ego in Women' (1928), Hanns Sachs has suggested the possibility that, since a vaginal phase cannot establish itself at that age, the girl displaces her obscure sensations in the vagina on to the mouth.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex' (1921).

<sup>3</sup> Karen Horney has been the first psycho-analyst to bring the castration complex of the woman into relation with her early feminine position as a small girl. In her paper, 'On the Genesis of the Castration Complex in Women' (1923),



these steps we shall see in what way her identification with her father is affected by anxiety arising from her feminine position and how the masculine position she adopts in each of her phases of development is superimposed upon a masculine position belonging to an earlier phase.

When the female infant gives up her mother's breast and turns to her father's penis as an object of gratification she identifies herself with her mother. But as soon as she suffers frustration in this position too, she very speedily identifies herself with her father, who, she imagines, obtains satisfaction from her mother's breast and entire body, that is, from those primary sources of gratification which she herself has been so painfully forced to relinquish. Feelings of hatred and envy towards her mother as well as libidinal desires for her go to create this earliest identification of the girl with her father (whom she regards as a sadistic figure); and in this identification enuresis plays an important rôle.

Children of both sexes regard urine in its positive aspect as equivalent to their mother's milk, in accordance with the unconscious, which equates all bodily substances with one another. My observations go to show that enuresis, in its earliest signification both as a positive, giving act and as a sadistic one, is an expression of a feminine position in boys as well as in girls.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that the hatred children feel towards their mother's breast for having frustrated their desires arouses in them, either at the same time as their cannibalistic impulses or very soon

this writer has pointed out certain factors which she believes are material in establishing in the girl an envy of the penis based on pre-genital cathexes. One of these is the gratification of scopophilic and exhibitionistic tendencies which she notices that the boy obtains from urinating; another is her belief that possession of a penis affords a greater amount of gratification of urethral erotism; while others are derived from the difficulties that beset her in regard to her feminine position—such as envy of her mother for having children—and increase her tendency to identify herself with her father as well as intensifying her penis-envy. Dr. Horney believes, moreover, that the same factors which induce the girl to take up a homosexual attitude lead, though in a minor degree, to the production of a castration complex in her.

<sup>1</sup> According to Helene Deutsch enuresis is the expression of a feminine position in the boy and a masculine one in the girl (*Psychoanalyse der Neurosen*, 1930, S. 51).

after, phantasies of injuring and destroying her breast with their urine.<sup>1</sup>

As has already been said, in the sadistic phase the girl puts her greatest belief in the magical powers of her excreta, while the boy makes his penis the principal executant of his sadism. But in her, too, belief in the omnipotence of her urinary functions leads her to identify herself—though to a lesser extent than does the boy—with her sadistic father, to whom she attributes special urethral-sadistic powers in virtue of his possession of a penis.<sup>2</sup> Thus incontinence from having been primarily the expression of a feminine position very soon comes to represent a masculine one for children of both sexes; and in connection with the girl's earliest identification with her sadistic father it becomes a means of destroying her mother; while at the same time she gets hold of her father's penis in her imagination by castrating him.

The identification which the female child makes between herself and her father on the basis of his introjected penis<sup>3</sup> follows, in my experience, upon the primary sadistic

<sup>1</sup> In doing this they make use of a mechanism which is, I think, of general importance in the formation of sadistic phantasies. They convert the pleasure they give their object into its opposite by adding destructive elements to it. As a revenge for not getting *enough* milk from their mother they will produce in imagination an excessive quantity of urine and so destroy her breast by flooding it or melting it away; and as a revenge for not getting '*good*' milk from her they will produce a harmful fluid with which to burn up or poison her breast and the milk it contains. This mechanism also gives rise to phantasies of tormenting and injuring people by giving them too much good food. In this case the subject may suffer, as I have found in more than one instance, from the retaliatory anxiety of being suffocated or of being too full, etc., in connection with taking food. One patient of mine could hardly control his rage if he was offered, even in the friendliest way, food, drink or cigarettes a second time. He would immediately feel 'stuffed up' and would lose all desire to eat, drink or smoke any more. Analysis showed that his behaviour was ultimately caused by phantasies of the early sadistic character described above.

<sup>2</sup> In her paper, 'On the Genesis of the Castration Complex in Women' (1923), Karen Horney states that one of the factors which encourage the girl's primary penis-envy in connection with her urethral-erotic impulses is that her sadistic phantasies of omnipotence which are based on urinary functions are especially closely associated with the stream of urine which the boy is able to produce.

<sup>3</sup> In considering the origins of homosexuality in women, Ernest Jones in his paper, 'The Early Development of Female Sexuality' (1927), has come to certain very fundamental conclusions which my own findings fully endorse. Briefly, they are to the effect that the presence of very strong phantasies of *fellatio* in the



identification she has made with him through her urinary incontinence. In her earliest masturbation phantasies she has identified herself alternately with each of her parents. When she occupies the feminine position she becomes afraid of her father's 'bad' penis which she has internalized. In order to counter this fear she activates the defensive mechanism of identification with the anxiety-object<sup>1</sup> and thus identifies herself more strongly with him. Her imaginary ownership of the penis she has stolen from him arouses a sense of omnipotence which increases her feeling that she wields destructive magic through her excreta. In this position her hatred and sadism against her mother becomes intensified and she has phantasies of destroying her by means of her father's penis; while at the same time she satisfies her feelings of revenge against the father who has frustrated her and finds in her sense of omnipotence and in her power over both parents a defence against anxiety. I have found this attitude especially strongly developed in one or two patients in whom paranoid traits predominated;<sup>2</sup> but it is also very powerful in women whose homosexuality is deeply coloured by feelings of rivalry and antagonism towards the male sex. It would thus apply to that group of female homosexuals, described by Ernest Jones, to which I have referred below in a footnote.

At this juncture the possession of an external penis helps

female, allied to a powerful oral sadism, prepares the way for a belief that she has taken forcible possession of her father's penis and puts her into a special relation of identification with him. In her homosexual attitude, derived in this way, she will show a want of interest in her own sex and a strong interest in men. Her endeavour will be to win recognition and respect from men, and she will have strong feelings of rivalry, hatred and resentment against them. As regards character-formation, she will exhibit in general marked oral-sadistic traits; and her identification with her father will be employed to a great degree in the service of her castration wishes.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> The reader may be referred in general to the case-history of Erna in Chapter III.; but one characteristic point may be cited from it here. At the age of six Erna suffered from severe insomnia. She had a terror of burglars and thieves which she could only overcome by lying on her stomach and banging her head on the pillows. This meant having sadistic coitus with her mother, in which she played the part of her supposedly sadistic father.

to convince the girl in the first place that she has in reality got that sadistic power over both her parents without which she cannot master her anxiety,<sup>1</sup> and, in the second place, that by having this sadistic power over her objects she can overcome the dangerous penis and objects introduced within her; so that having a penis ultimately serves the purpose of protecting her body from destruction.

While her sadistic position, reinforced as it is by her anxiety, thus forms the basis of a masculinity complex in her, her sense of guilt also makes her want to have a penis. She wants a penis in order to make restitution towards her mother. As Joan Riviere has observed in the paper referred to below, the girl's wish to compensate her mother for having deprived her of her father's penis furnishes important additions to her castration complex and penis-envy. When the girl is obliged to give up her rivalry with her mother out of fear of her, her desire to placate her and make up for what she has done leads her to long intensely for a penis as a means of making restitution. In Joan Riviere's opinion the intensity of her sadism and the extent of her capacity to tolerate anxiety are factors which will help to determine whether she will take up a heterosexual line or a homosexual one.

We must now examine more closely why it is that in some cases the girl cannot make restitution to her mother unless she adopts a masculine position and is in possession of a penis. Early analysis<sup>2</sup> has demonstrated the existence in the unconscious of a fundamental principle governing all reactive and sublimatory processes, by which restitutive acts must adhere in every detail to the imaginary damage that has been done. Whatever wrongs the child has done in phantasy in the way of stealing, injuring, and destroying

<sup>1</sup> In her paper, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade' (1929), p. 303, Joan Riviere has pointed out that in her anger and hatred against her parents for giving one another sexual gratification the girl has phantasies of castrating her father and taking possession of his penis and thus getting her father and mother into her power and killing them.

<sup>2</sup> On this, as on many other important points, my analytic observations are in full agreement with those of M. N. Searl.



it must make good by giving back, putting to rights, and restoring, one by one. This principle also requires that the same instruments that have been used to commit the bad actions shall also be used to undo them. The child must transform its excretions, penis, etc., which in its sadistic phantasies are dangerous and destructive substances, into beneficent and remedial ones. Whatever harm the 'bad' penis and 'bad' urine have done, the 'good' penis and 'good' urine must put right again.<sup>1</sup>

Let us suppose that a girl has centred her sadistic phantasies more especially around the indirect destruction of her mother by her father's dangerous penis and that she has identified herself very strongly with her sadistic father. As soon as her reactive tendencies and her desires to make restitution set in force, she will feel urged to restore her mother by means of a beneficent penis and thus her homosexual tendencies will become reinforced. An important factor in this connection is the extent to which she believes that her father has been incapacitated from making restitution, either because she has castrated him or has put him out of the way or has made his penis too 'bad', and that she must therefore give up hope of restoring him.<sup>2</sup> If she believes this very strongly she will have to play his part herself, and this again will tend to make her adopt a homosexual position.

The disappointment and doubts and the sense of inferiority which overtake the girl when she realizes that she

<sup>1</sup> In her 'Psychotic Mechanisms in Cultural Development' (1930) Melitta Schmideberg traces the part played in the history of medicine by a belief in the magical qualities of the 'good' penis, as symbolized by medicine, and of the 'bad' one, as symbolized by the demon of illness. She attributes the psychological effects of physical remedies to the following causes. The person's original attitude of aggression against his father's penis—an attitude which has turned that organ into an extremely dangerous one—is succeeded by an attitude of obedience and submission towards him. If he takes the medicines he is given in this latter spirit, they, as representing the 'good' penis, will counteract the 'bad' objects inside him.

<sup>2</sup> If her homosexuality emerges in sublimated ways only, she will, for instance, protect and take care of other women (*i.e.* her mother), adopting in these respects a husband's attitude towards them, and will have but little interest in the male sex. Ernest Jones has shown that this attitude develops in female homosexuals in whom the oral-sucking fixation is very strong.

has not got a penis, and the fears and feelings of guilt which her masculine position gives rise to (in the first place towards her father because she has deprived him of his penis and of the possession of her mother, and in the second place towards her mother because she has taken her father away from her), combine to break down that position. Moreover, her original grievance against her mother for having prevented her from getting her father's penis as a libidinal object joins forces with her new grievance against her for having withheld from her the possession of a penis as an attribute of masculinity; and this double grievance leads her to turn away from her mother as an object of genital love. On the other hand, her feelings of hatred against her father and her envy of his penis, which arise from her masculine position, stand in the way of her once more adopting a feminine rôle.

According to my experience, the girl, after having left the phallic phase, passes through yet another phase, a post-phallic one, in which she makes her choice between retaining the feminine position and abandoning it. I should say that by the time she has entered upon the latency period her feminine position, which has attained the genital level and is passive<sup>1</sup> and maternal in character and which involves the functioning of her vagina, or at least of its psychological representatives, has been established in all its fundamentals. That this is so becomes still more probable when we consider how frequently small girls take up a genuinely feminine and maternal position. A position of this kind would be unthinkable unless the vagina was behaving as a receptive organ. Of course, as has already been pointed out, important alterations take place in the functions of the vagina as a result of the biological changes the girl undergoes at puberty and of her experience of the sexual act; and it is these alterations which bring the girl's development to its final stage from a psychological point of

<sup>1</sup> Helene Deutsch also believes that the true passive feminine attitude of the vagina is to be found in its oral and sucking activity (*Zur Psychologie der weiblichen Sexualfunktionen*, 1925).



view as well and which make her a woman in the full sense of the word.

In this connection I find myself in agreement on many points with Karen Horney's paper, 'The Flight from Womanhood' (1926), in which she comes to the conclusion that the vagina plays a part in the early life of the female child as well as the clitoris. She points out that it would be reasonable to infer from the appearance of frigidity in women that the vaginal zone is more likely to be strongly cathected with anxiety and defensive affects than the clitoris. She believes that the girl's incestuous wishes and phantasies have been correctly referred by her unconscious to the vagina and that her frigidity in later life is the manifestation of a defensive measure undertaken against them by her ego on account of the great danger they involve for it. I also share Karen Horney's opinion that the girl's inability to obtain any certain knowledge about the conformation of her vagina or, unlike the boy who can inspect his genitals, to submit it to a reality test in order to find out whether it has been overtaken by the dreaded consequences of masturbation tends to increase her genital anxiety and makes her more likely to adopt a masculine position. Karen Horney furthermore distinguishes between the girl's secondary penis-envy, which emerges in the phallic phase, and her primary penis-envy, which rests upon certain pre-genital cathexes such as scopophilia and urethral erotism. She believes that the girl's secondary penis-envy is used to repress her feminine desires; and that when her Oedipus complex is given up she invariably—though not always to the same degree—relinquishes her father as a sexual object and moves away from the feminine rôle, regressing at the same time to her primary penis-envy.

The views I put forward a few years ago concerning the final stage of the girl's genital organization<sup>1</sup> agree in many essentials with those which Ernest Jones came to at about the same time. In his paper, 'The Early Develop-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

ment of Female Sexuality' (1927), he suggests that the vaginal functions were originally identified with the anal, and that the differentiation of the two—a still obscure process—takes place in part at an earlier stage than is generally supposed. He assumes the existence of a mouth-anus-vagina stage which forms the basis of the girl's heterosexual attitude and represents an identification with her mother. According to his view, too, the normal girl's phallic phase is only a weakened form of the identification made by homosexual females with the father and his penis, and is, like it, pre-eminently of a secondary and defensive character.

Helene Deutsch is of a different opinion.<sup>1</sup> She assumes, it is true, the existence of a post-phallic phase which influences the final outcome of the girl's later genital organization. But she believes that the girl does not have any such thing as a vaginal phase at all, and that it is the exception for her to know anything about the existence of her vagina or to have any sensations there, and that therefore when she has finished her infantile sexual development she cannot take up a feminine position in the genital sense. In consequence, her libido, even though maintaining a feminine position, is obliged to retrogress and cathect earlier positions dominated by her castration complex (which in Helene Deutsch's view precedes her Oedipus complex); and a backward step of this kind would be a fundamental factor in the production of feminine masochism.

### *Restitutive Tendencies and Sexuality*

We have already examined the part played by the girl's restitutive tendencies in consolidating her homosexual position. The consolidation of her heterosexual position, too, depends upon that position being in conformity with the requirements of her super-ego.

As we saw in an earlier part of this chapter, even where

<sup>1</sup> Helene Deutsch, 'The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women' (1930).



the normal individual is concerned, the sexual act, in addition to its libidinal motivation, helps him to master anxiety. His genital activities have yet another motive force, which is his desire to make good by means of copulation the damage he has done through his sadistic phantasies.<sup>1</sup> When, as a result of the stronger emergence of genital impulses, his ego reacts to his super-ego with less anxiety and more guilt, he finds in the sexual act a pre-eminent means of making reparation to the object, because of its connection with his early sadistic phantasies. The nature and extent of his restitutive phantasies, which must correspond to the imaginary damage he has done, will not only be an important factor in his various activities and in the formation of his sublimations but will very greatly influence the course and outcome of his sexual development.<sup>2</sup>

Turning to the girl, we find that such considerations as the contents and composition of her sadistic phantasies, the magnitude of her reactive tendencies and the structure and strength of her ego will affect her libidinal fixations and help to decide whether the restitution she makes shall have a masculine or a feminine character or be a mixture of the two.<sup>3</sup>

Another thing which seems to me to be of importance for the final outcome of the girl's development is whether the restitutive phantasies which she builds up upon her specific sadistic ideas can impose themselves upon her ego as well as upon her sexual life. Ordinarily they work in both directions and reinforce one another, and thus help to establish a libido-position and an ego-position which are

<sup>1</sup> In her paper, 'Einige unbewusste Mechanismen im pathologischen Sexualleben' (1932), Melitta Schmideberg has also come to the conclusion that restitutive tendencies are of great importance as an incentive to heterosexual and homosexual activities.

<sup>2</sup> If his sense of guilt is excessive, the fusion of his sexual activities and his reactive tendencies may give rise to severe disturbances of his sexual life. We shall reserve for the next chapter a discussion of the effect which the desire to make restitution has upon the sexual development and potency of the male individual.

<sup>3</sup> Even where her sadism remains dominant, the means she employs to master her anxiety will influence her sexual life and may either lead her to maintain a homosexual attitude or adopt a heterosexual one, both positions being based upon her sadistic tendencies.

compatible with each other. If, for instance, the small girl's sadism has been strongly centred in phantasies of damaging her mother's body and stealing children and her father's penis from it, she may be able, when her reactive tendencies set in force, to maintain her feminine position under certain conditions. In her sublimations she will give effect to her desire to restore her mother and give her back her father and children, by becoming a nurse or a masseuse or by pursuing intellectual interests;<sup>1</sup> and if at the same time she has sufficient belief in the possibility of her own body being restored by having children or performing the sexual act with a 'beneficent' penis, she will also employ her heterosexual position as an aid to mastering anxiety. Moreover, her heterosexual tendencies support her sublimatory ones which aim at the restoration of her mother's body, for they show her that copulation between her parents cannot have injured her mother, or at any rate that it can restore her; and this belief, in turn, helps to consolidate her in her heterosexual position.

What the girl's final position is going to be will also depend, given the same underlying conditions, upon whether her belief in her own constructive omnipotence comes up to the strength of her reactive tendencies. If it does, her ego can set up a further aim to be fulfilled by her restitutive tendencies. This is that both her parents should be restored and should once more be united in amity. It is now her father who, in her phantasies, makes restitution to her mother and gratifies her by means of his health-giving penis; whilst her mother's vagina, originally imagined as a dangerous thing, restores and heals her father's penis which

<sup>1</sup> In my 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse' (1929) I have analysed an account by Karen Michaelis of a young woman who suddenly developed a great talent for painting portraits of women without ever having handled a brush before. I have tried to show that what caused this sudden burst of artistic productivity was anxiety emanating from her most profound danger-situations, and that painting female portraits symbolized a sublimated restoration both of her mother's body, which she had attacked in phantasy, and of her own, whose destruction she awaited out of dread of retaliation; so that in this way she was able to allay fears arising from the deepest levels of her mind.



it has injured. In thus looking upon her mother's vagina as a beneficent and pleasure-giving organ, the girl is not only able to call up once more her earliest view of her mother as the 'good' mother who gave her suck, but can think of herself, in identification with her, as a beneficent and giving person and can regard the penis of her partner in love as a 'good' penis. Upon an attitude of this kind will rest the successful development of her sexual life and her ability to become attached to her object by ties of sex no less than of affection and love.

As I have tried to show in these pages, the final outcome of the infantile sexual development of the individual is the result of a long-drawn-out process of fluctuation between various positions and is built up upon a great number of interconnected compromises between his ego and his super-ego and between his ego and his id. These compromises, being the result of his endeavours to master anxiety, are themselves to a great extent an achievement of his ego. Those of them which, in the girl, go to maintain her feminine rôle and which find typical expression in her later sexual life and general behaviour are, to mention only a few, that her father's penis shall gratify herself and her mother alternately;<sup>1</sup> that a certain number of the children shall be allocated to her mother, and the same number, or rather fewer, to herself; that she shall incorporate her father's penis, while her mother shall receive all the children,—and so on. Masculine components enter into such compromises as well. The small girl will sometimes imagine that she appropriates her father's penis in order to carry out a masculine rôle towards her mother, and then gives it back to him again.

In the course of an analysis it becomes apparent that every change for the better which takes place in the libido-

<sup>1</sup> Phantasies with this content play a part in the homosexuality of women similar to that played in the homosexuality of men by phantasies of meeting their father's penis, as an object of gratification or of hatred, inside their mother's body. This may be because, where the girl's attitude is predominantly sadistic, they represent the destruction, undertaken in common by herself and her mother, of her father's penis; or, where it is predominantly positive, a libidinal gratification obtained in common with her from his penis.

position of the patient springs from a diminution of his anxiety and sense of guilt and at once takes effect in the production of fresh compromises. The more the anxiety and guilt which the girl feels is decreased and the more her genital stage comes to the fore, the more easily is she able to let her mother adopt, or rather, resume, a feminine and maternal rôle and at the same time to take on a similar rôle herself and sublimate her male components.

### *External Factors*

We know that the child's early phantasies and instinctual life on the one hand and the pressure of reality upon it on the other interact upon each other and that their combined action shapes the course of its mental development. In my judgment, reality and real objects affect its anxiety-situations from the very earliest stages of its existence, in the sense that it regards them as so many proofs or refutations of its anxiety-situations, which it has displaced into the outer world, and they thus help to guide the course of its instinctual life. And since, owing to the interaction of the mechanisms of projection and introjection, the external factors influence the formation of its super-ego and the growth of its object-relationship and its instincts, they will also assist in determining what the outcome of its sexual development will be.

If, for instance, the small girl looks in vain to her father for the love and kindness which shall confirm her belief in the 'good' penis inside her and be a counter-weight to her belief in the 'bad' penis there, she will often grow more firmly entrenched in her masochistic attitude and the 'sadistic father' may even become an actual condition of love for her; or his behaviour to her may increase her feelings of hatred and anxiety against his penis and impel her to abandon the feminine rôle or to become frigid. Actually, whether the outcome of her development is to be favourable or unfavourable will depend upon the co-operation of a whole number of external factors.



For instance, her father's attitude to her is not the only thing which helps to decide what type of person she will fall in love with. It is not only a question, say, of whether he favours or neglects her too much in comparison with her mother or her sisters, but of his direct relations with those persons. How far she will be able to maintain her feminine position and in that position evolve a wish for a kindly father-*imago* also depends very greatly upon her sense of guilt towards her mother and thus upon the nature of the relations between her mother and father.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, certain events, such as the illness or death of one of her parents or of a brother or sister, can assist in strengthening in her either the one sexual position or the other, according to the way in which they affect her sense of guilt.

Another thing which plays a very important part in the development of the child is the presence in its early life of a person, not its father or mother, whom it looks upon as a 'helping' figure and who gives it support in the external world against its phantastic fears. In dividing its mother into a 'good' mother and a 'bad' one and its father into a 'good' father and a 'bad' one, it attaches the hatred it feels for its object to the 'bad' one or turns away from it, while it directs its restorative tendencies to its 'good' mother and 'good' father and, in imagination, makes good towards them the damage it has done its parent-*imagos* in its sadistic phantasies.<sup>2</sup> But if, because its anxiety is too great or for realistic reasons, its Oedipus objects have not become good *imagos*, other persons, such as a kindly nurse, brother or sister, a grandparent or an aunt or uncle, can, in certain circumstances, take over the rôle of the 'good'

<sup>1</sup> Since the way in which each child will receive the impressions of reality is already largely determined by his or her early anxiety-situations, the same events will have different effects on different children. But there can be no doubt that the existence of happy and harmonious relations between their parents and between themselves and their parents is of underlying importance for their successful sexual development and mental health. Of course, a happy family life of this kind presupposes in general that the parents are not neurotic; so that a constitutional factor enters into the situation as well.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter IX.

mother or the 'good' father.<sup>1</sup> In this way its positive feelings, whose growth has been inhibited owing to its excessive fear of its Oedipus objects, can come to the fore and attach themselves to a love-object.

As has been pointed out more than once in these pages, the existence of sexual relations between children in early life, especially between brothers and sisters, is a very common occurrence. The libidinal craving of small children, intensified as it is by their Oedipus frustrations, together with the anxiety emanating from their deepest danger-situations, impel them to indulge in mutual sexual activities, since these, as I have more particularly tried to show in the present chapter, not only gratify their libido but enable them to obtain many refutations of their various fears in connection with the sexual act. I have repeatedly found that if such sexual objects have acted in addition as 'helping' figures, early sexual relations of this kind exert a favourable influence upon the girl's relations to her objects and upon her later sexual development.<sup>2</sup> Where an excessive fear of both parents, together with certain external factors, would have produced an Oedipus situation which would have prejudiced her attitude towards the opposite sex and greatly hampered her in the maintenance of her feminine position and in her ability to love, the fact that she has had sexual relations with a brother or brother-substitute in early childhood and that that brother has also shown real affection for her and been her protector, has provided the basis for a heterosexual position in her and developed her capacity for love. I have one or two cases in mind in which the girl had had two types of love-object, one representing the stern father and the other the kind brother.<sup>3</sup> In other cases, she had developed an

<sup>1</sup> A pet animal may also play the part of a 'helping' object in the imagination of children and thus assist in diminishing their anxiety. And so may a doll or a toy animal, to which they often assign the function of protecting them while they are asleep.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter VII.

<sup>3</sup> Each type had become important at different periods of her life. Analysis showed that whenever her anxiety increased in amount and certain external factors became operative she was led to choose the more sadistic type of person



imago which was a mixture of the two types; and here, too, her relations to her brother had lessened her masochism.

In serving as a proof grounded upon reality of the existence of the 'good' penis, the girl's relations with her brother fortify her belief in the 'good' introjected penis and moderate her fear of 'bad' introjected objects. They also help her to master her anxiety in those respects, since in performing sexual acts with another child she gets a feeling of being in league with him against her parents. Their sexual relations have made the two children accomplices in crime, by reviving in them sadistic masturbation phantasies that were originally directed against their father and mother and causing them to indulge in them together. In thus sharing in that deepest guilt each child feels relieved of some of the weight of it and is also less frightened, because it believes that it has an ally against its dreaded objects. As far as I can see, the existence of a secret complicity of this sort, which, in my opinion, plays an essential part in every relationship of love, even between grown-up people, is of special importance in sexual attachments where the individual is of a paranoid type.<sup>1</sup>

The girl also regards her sexual attachment to the other child, who represents the 'good' object, as a disproof by means of reality of her fear of her own sexuality and that of her object as something destructive; so that an attachment of this sort may prevent her from becoming frigid or succumbing to other sexual disturbances in later life.

Nevertheless, although, as we see, experiences of this kind can have a favourable effect upon the girl's sexual life and object-relationships, they can also lead to grave disorders in that field.<sup>2</sup> If her sexual relations with another child serve to confirm her deepest fears—either because her partner is too sadistic or because performing the sexual

or at least to be unable to resist his advances; while, as soon as she had succeeded in detaching herself from that sadistic object, the other, kindly type, representing her brother, emerged and she became less masochistic and was able to choose a satisfactory object.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of this point see the following chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter VII. on this head.

act arouses yet more anxiety and guilt in her on account of her own excessive sadism—her belief in the harmfulness of her introjected objects and her own id will become still stronger, her super-ego will grow more severe than ever, and, as a result, her neurosis and all the defects of her sexual and characterological development will gain ground.<sup>1</sup>

### *Development at Puberty*

The psychological upheavals which the child undergoes during the age of puberty are, as we know, to a large extent due to the intensification of its impulses which accompanies the physiological changes that are taking place in it. In the girl the onset of menstruation gives additional reinforcement to her anxiety. In her *Zur Psychologie der weiblichen Sexualfunktionen* (1926) Helene Deutsch has discussed at length the psychological significance of puberty for the girl and the trial it imposes on her, and she has come to the conclusion that the first flow of blood is equivalent in the unconscious to having actually been castrated and having forfeited the possibility of having a child, and is, therefore, a double disappointment. Helene Deutsch points out that menstruation also signifies a punishment for having indulged in clitoral masturbation and, in addition, that it regressively revives the girl's infantile view of copulation according to which it is nearly always a sadistic act involving cruelty and the flow of blood.<sup>2</sup>

My own data fully bear out Helene Deutsch's view that the disappointments and shocks to her narcissism which the girl receives when she begins to menstruate are very great. But I think that their pathogenic effect is due to the circumstance that they reactivate past fears in her. They are only a few items in the inventory of her anxiety-situations which menstruation brings to the surface once more. These fears, as we have seen earlier in the present chapter, are, briefly, the following:

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<sup>1</sup> This is still more the case where the child has been seduced or raped by a grown-up person. Such an experience, as is well known, can have very serious effects upon the child's mind.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *loc cit.* S. 36.



1. In virtue of the equation of all bodily substances with one another in the unconscious, she identifies her menstrual blood with her supposedly dangerous excreta.<sup>1</sup> Since she has early learned to associate bleeding with being cut, her fear that these dangerous excreta have damaged her own body seems to her to have been borne out by reality.

2. The menstrual flow increases her terror that her body will be attacked. In this connection various fears are at work: (a) Her fear of being attacked and destroyed by her mother partly out of revenge, partly so as to get back her father's penis and the children which she (the girl) has deprived her of. (b) Her fear of being attacked and damaged by her father through his copulating with her in a sadistic way,<sup>2</sup> either because she has had sadistic masturbation phantasies about her mother or because he wants to get back the penis she has taken from him. Her phantasy that in thus forcibly recovering his penis from her he will injure her genitals underlies, I think, the idea she has later on that her clitoris is a wound or scar where her penis once was. (c) Her fear that the interior of her body will be attacked and destroyed by her introjected objects either directly or indirectly as a consequence of their fight with one another inside her. Her phantasy that she has introjected her violent parents in the act of performing sadistic coitus and that they are endangering her own inside in destroying each other there calls out fears of a very acute kind in her. She regards the bodily sensations which menstruation often gives rise to in her, and which her anxiety augments, as a sign that all the injuries she has dreaded to receive and all her hypochondriacal fears have come true.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lewin, 'Kotschmieren, Menses und weibliches Über-Ich' (1930).

<sup>2</sup> In her paper, 'Psychoanalytisches zur Menstruation' (1931), Melitta Schmideberg has pointed out that the girl regards menstruation, among other things, as the result of having been copulated with sadistically by her father and that she is all the more terrified since she believes that this action on his part was done in retaliation for her aggression towards both him and her mother. Just as in her sadistic phantasies as a child he was the executive of her aggressive desire against her mother, so now he is the one to carry out the punishment her mother metes out to her. In addition, his sadistic coitus with her represents his own punishment of her for the castration-wishes she harbours against the male sex in connection with copulation.

3. The flow of blood from the interior of her body convinces her that the children inside her have been injured and destroyed. In some analyses of women I have found that their fear of being childless (*i.e.* of having had the children inside them destroyed) had been intensified since the onset of menstruation and had not been removed until they actually did have a child. But in many cases menstruation, in adding to their fear of having damaged or abnormal children, causes them, consciously or unconsciously, to reject pregnancy altogether.

4. Menstruation, by confirming the girl in the knowledge that she has no penis and in the belief that her clitoris is the scar or wound left by her castrated penis,<sup>1</sup> makes it harder for her to maintain a masculine position.

5. In being a sign of sexual maturity, menstruation activates all those sources of anxiety, mentioned earlier on in this chapter, which are connected with her ideas that sexual behaviour has a sadistic character.

Analyses of female patients at the age of puberty show that for the reasons given above the girl feels that her feminine position as well as her masculine one have become untenable. Menstruation has a much greater effect in activating sources of anxiety and conflicts in the girl than do the parallel developmental processes in the boy. This is partly why she is sexually more inhibited than he is at puberty.

The psychological effects of menstruation are in part responsible for the fact that at this age the girl's neurotic difficulties often increase very greatly. Even if she is normal menstruation resuscitates her old anxiety-situations, though, since her ego and her methods of mastering anxiety have been adequately developed, she is better able to modify her anxiety than she was in early childhood. Ordinarily, too, she obtains a strong satisfaction from the onset of menstruation. Provided that her feminine position has been well established during the first expansion of her

<sup>1</sup> In my opinion, the girl's primary phantasy, mentioned under 2 (b), to the effect that her genitals (clitoris) have been damaged through her having had her introjected penis forcibly taken from her, or her fear that this will happen, forms the basis of her phantasy that her genitals have been damaged by castration.



sexual life, she will regard menstruation as a proof of being sexually mature and a woman, and as a sign that she may put still greater confidence in her expectation of receiving sexual gratification and having children. If this is so, she will look upon menstruation as evidence against various sources of anxiety.

### *Relations to her Children*

In describing the early sexual development of the female individual I did not go very fully into her desire to have children, since I wanted to deal with her infantile attitude to her imaginary children at the same time as I dealt with her attitude in later life, during pregnancy, to the real child inside her.

Freud has stated that the girl's desire to have a child takes the place of her wish to possess a penis;<sup>1</sup> but according to my observations, what it takes the place of is her desire for her father's penis in an object-libidinal sense. In some cases the principal equation she makes is between children and faeces. Here her relation to the child seems to develop mainly on narcissistic lines. It is more independent of her attitude to the man and closely connected with her own body and with the omnipotence of her excrements. In other cases she mostly equates children with a penis; and here her attitude to her child rests more strongly upon her relations to her father or to his penis. There is a universal infantile sexual theory to the effect that the mother incorporates a new penis every time she copulates and that these penises, or a part of them, turn into children. In consequence of this theory the girl's relations to her father's penis influence her relations first of all to her imaginary children and later on to her real ones.

In the book which I have already quoted, *Zur Psychoanalyse der weiblichen Sexualfunktionen*, Helene Deutsch, in discussing the attitude of the pregnant woman to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Freud, 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1927).

child inside her puts forward the following view. The woman looks upon her child both as a part of her ego and as an object outside it 'in regard to which she repeats all the positive and negative object-relationships which she has had towards her own mother'. In her phantasies her father has been turned into her child in the act of copulation, 'which, ultimately, represents to her unconscious the oral incorporation of her father', and he 'retains this rôle in the real or imaginary pregnancy which ensues'. After this process of introjection has taken place her child becomes 'the incarnation of the ego-ideal which she has already developed earlier' and also represents 'the embodiment of her own ideals which she has not been able to attain'. The ambivalent attitude she has towards her child is partly due to this fact that it stands for her super-ego—often in strong opposition to her ego—and revives in her those ambivalent feelings towards her father which arose out of her Oedipus situation. But it is also partly due to her making a regressive cathexis of her earlier libidinal positions. Her identification of children with faeces, of which she has a narcissistic valuation, becomes the basis of a similar narcissistic valuation of her child; and her reaction-formations against her original over-estimation of her excrements awakens feelings of disgust in her and makes her want to expel her child.

This view requires, I think, to be amplified in one or two directions. The equation which the female has made in the early stages of her development between her father's penis and a child leads her to give to the child inside her the significance of a paternal super-ego, since his internalized penis forms the nucleus of that super-ego. Thus her attitude to her imaginary or real child is not only an ambivalent one but is charged with a certain quantity of anxiety which exerts a decisive influence upon her relations to her child. The equation she has made between faeces and children has also, I have found, affected her relation to her imaginary child when she is still quite small. And the anxiety which she feels on account of her phantasies about her



poisonous and burning excreta, and which, in my opinion, reinforces her expelling tendencies belonging to the earlier anal stage, is one of the reasons why she has feelings of hatred and fear later on towards the real child inside her.

As I have already pointed out, the girl's fear of her 'bad' introjected penis induces her to strengthen her introjection of a 'good' penis, since it offers her protection and assistance against the 'bad' penis inside her, her bad imagos and her excreta which she regards as dangerous substances. It is this friendly, 'good' penis, often conceived of as a small one, which takes on the significance of a child. This imaginary child, which affords the small girl protection and help, primarily represents in her unconscious the 'good' contents of her body. The support it gives her against her anxiety is, of course, purely phantastic, but then the objects she is afraid of are equally phantastic; for in this stage of her development she is mostly governed by internal and subjective reality.<sup>1</sup>

In my view it is because the possession of children is a means of overcoming her anxiety and allaying her sense of guilt that the little girl normally feels such an intense need to have children—a need which is greater than any other desire. As we know, grown-up women often have a stronger desire to have a child than to have a sexual partner.

The small girl's attitude towards the child is also of great importance for the creation of her sublimations. The imaginary attacks she makes upon her mother's inside by means of her poisonous and destructive excreta bring on misgivings about the contents of her own body. Owing to her equation of faeces with children her phantasies about the 'bad' faeces inside her lead her to have phantasies about having a 'bad' child<sup>2</sup> in there, and that is equivalent to having a 'horrible', malformed one. The girl's reaction-

<sup>1</sup> Recognition of internal reality is the foundation of adaptation to external reality. The child's attitude to its imaginary objects, which, in this stage of its life, are phantastic imagos of its external, real objects, will determine its relations to those objects later on.

<sup>2</sup> The equation of a 'bad' penis with a child has already been discussed. The two equations exist side by side and reinforce each other.

formations to her sadistic phantasies about dangerous faeces give rise, it seems to me, to sublimations of a specifically feminine type. In analysing small girls we can see very clearly how closely their longing to possess a 'beautiful' (*i.e.* 'good' and healthy) child and their indefatigable efforts to beautify their imaginary baby and their own body are connected with their fear of having produced in themselves and put inside their mother 'bad' and horrid children whom they liken to poisonous excrement.

Ferenczi has described the changes which the child's interest in faeces undergoes in the various stages of its development, and has come to the conclusion that its coprophilic tendencies are early sublimated in part into a pleasure in shining things.<sup>1</sup> One element in this process of sublimation is, I think, the child's fear of 'bad' and dangerous pieces of stool. From this there is a direct sublimatory path leading to the theme of 'beauty'. The very strong need which women feel to have a beautiful body and a lovely home and for beauty in general is based on their desire to possess a beautiful interior to their body in which 'good' and lovely objects and innocuous excrements are lodged. Another line of sublimation from the girl's fear of 'bad' and 'dangerous' excrements leads to the idea of 'good' products in the sense of health-giving ones (though, incidentally, 'good' and 'beautiful' often mean the same thing to the small child), and in this way goes to strengthen in her those original maternal feelings and desires to give which spring from her feminine position.

If the small girl is sufficiently buoyed up by feelings of an optimistic kind she will believe not only that her internalized penis is a 'good' one but that the children inside her are helpful beings. But if she is filled with fear of a 'bad' internalized penis and of dangerous excrements, her relation to her real child in later life will often be dominated by anxiety. Not seldom, however, where her relations to her sexual partner do not satisfy her, she will establish a relation to her child which will afford her gratification and

<sup>1</sup> Ferenczi, 'The Origin of Interest in Money' (1914).



moral support. In these cases, in which the sexual act itself has received too strongly the significance of an anxiety-situation and her sexual object has become an anxiety-object to her, it is her child which attracts to itself the quality of a 'good' and helpful penis. Again, a woman who overcomes anxiety precisely by means of her sexual activities may have a fairly good relation to her husband and a bad one to her child. In this case she has displaced her anxiety concerning the enemy inside her for the most part on to her child; and it is her fears resulting from this which, I have found, are at the bottom of her fear of pregnancy and child-birth and which add to her physical sufferings while she is pregnant and may even render her psychologically incapable of conceiving a child.

We have already seen in what way the woman's fear of the 'bad' penis can increase her sadism. Women who have a strong sadistic attitude to their husband usually look upon their child as an enemy. Just as they regard the sexual act as a means of destroying their object, so do they want to have a child mainly in order to get it into their power as though it was something hostile to them. They can then employ the hatred which they feel for their internal, dreaded foe against external objects—against husband and child. There are also, of course, women who have a sadistic attitude to their husband and a relatively friendly one to their children, and *vice versa*. But in every case it is the woman's attitude to her introjected objects, especially her father's penis, which will determine her attitude to her husband and child.

The attitude of the mother to her children is based, as we know, upon her early relations to her objects. According as her child is a boy or a girl she will have towards it, to a greater or lesser degree, those emotional relationships which she had in early childhood towards her father and uncles and brothers, or towards her mother and aunts and sisters. If she has principally equated the idea of a child with that of a 'good' penis, it will be the positive elements of those relationships which she will carry over to her

child.<sup>1</sup> She will condense a number of friendly imagos in its person,<sup>2</sup> and it will represent the 'innocence' of infancy and will be in her eyes what she would like to picture herself as having been in early childhood. And one of the ultimate motives for the hopes she places upon its growing up well and happily is that she may be able, in retrospect, to turn her own unsatisfactory childhood into a time of happiness.

There are, I think, a whole number of factors which help to fortify the emotional relationship which the mother has towards her child. In bringing it into the world she has produced the strongest refutation in reality of all the fears that arise from her sadistic phantasies. The birth of her child not only signifies in her unconscious that the interior of her own body and the imaginary children there are unharmed or have been made well again but invalidates all sorts of fears associated with the idea of children. It shows that the children inside her mother—her brothers and sisters—and her father's penis (or her father) which she has attacked there, and also her mother, are all unharmed or made whole again. Having a baby thus represents restoring a number of objects—even, in some cases, re-creating a whole world.

Giving suck to her child is very important too, and forms a very close and special tie between her and it. In giving her child a product of her own body which is essential to its nourishment and growth she is enabled finally to disprove and put a happy end to that vicious circle which was started in her as an infant by her attacks upon her mother's breast as the first object of her destructive impulses and

<sup>1</sup> The girl often identifies her imaginary child in her unconscious with a small and innocuous penis. It is partly in this connection that her relations with her brother or some other child help her to confirm her belief in the 'good' penis. As a small child she ascribes an enormous amount of sadism to her father's penis and finds her brother's small penis, if less worthy of admiration, at any rate not so dangerous.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) Freud says on p. 89: 'It' (aggression) 'is at the bottom of all the relations of affection and love between human beings—possibly with the single exception of that of a mother to her male child'. Where the woman is strongly affected by the equation between the child and the 'good' penis, she is especially liable to concentrate all the positive elements of her feeling upon her child, should it be a boy.



which contained phantasies of destroying the breast by biting it to pieces and dirtying, poisoning, and burning it by means of her excreta. For in her unconscious she regards the fact that she is giving her child nourishing and beneficial milk as a proof that her own early sadistic phantasies have not come true or that she has succeeded in restoring the objects of them.<sup>1</sup>

As has already been pointed out, the individual loves his 'good' object the more because, by being something to which he can devote his restitutive tendencies, it affords him gratification and lessens his anxiety. No object possesses this qualification to such an eminent degree as does the helpless little child. Furthermore, in expending her maternal love and care upon her child she not only fulfils her earliest desires but, since she identifies herself with it, shares the pleasures she gives it. In thus reversing the relationship of mother and child she is able to experience a happy renewal of her earliest attachment to her own mother and to let her primal feelings of hatred for her recede into the background and her positive feelings come to the fore.

All these factors contribute to give children a tremendous importance in the emotional life of women. And we can readily see why it is that their mental balance should be so much upset if their child does not turn out well and, especially, if it is abnormal. Just as a healthy and thriving child is a refutation of a whole number of fears, so is an abnormal, sickly, or merely rather unsatisfactory one a confirmation of them, and may even come to be regarded as an enemy and a persecutor.

### *Ego-Development*

We shall now only consider briefly the relation between the formation of the girl's super-ego and the development

<sup>1</sup> She also takes this as a proof in reality that her urine, which she likens to milk, is not harmful; just as, on the other hand, she often looks upon her menstrual blood as a proof in reality that her urine and other excreta are dangerous substances. Moreover, the fact that her supply of milk does not give out is a refutation not only of her fear, arising from her sadistic phantasies, that her breast has been

of her ego. Freud has shown that some of the differences that exist between the super-ego formation of the girl and that of the boy are associated with anatomical sexual differences.<sup>1</sup> These anatomical differences affect, I think, both the development of the super-ego and the ego in various ways. In consequence of the structure of the female genitals, which marks their receptive function, the girl's Oedipus tendencies are more largely dominated by her oral impulses, and the introjection of her super-ego is more extensive than in the boy. In addition there is the absence of a penis as an active organ. The fact that she has no penis increases the greater dependence the girl already has upon her super-ego as a result of her stronger introjective tendencies.

I have already put forward the view in earlier pages of this book that the boy's primary sense of omnipotence is associated with his penis, which is also the representative in his unconscious of activities and sublimations proceeding from his masculine components. In the girl, who does not possess a penis, the sense of omnipotence is more profoundly and extensively associated with her father's introjected penis than it is in the case of the boy. This is the more so because the picture which she has formed as a child of his penis inside her and which determines the standards she sets up for herself has been evolved out of extremely highly coloured phantasies and is thus more exaggerated than the boy's both in the direction of 'goodness' and of 'badness'.

This view that the super-ego is more strongly operative in women than in men seems at first sight to be out of keeping with the fact that, compared to men, women are often more dependent upon their objects, more easily influenced by the outer world and more variable in their moral standards—that is, apparently less guided by the require-

destroyed, but convinces her that her excrements are not harmful to her own body. These were the weapons she used to attack her mother's breast in her imagination, and she now sees that they have done no harm.

<sup>1</sup> 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1927).



ments of a super-ego. But I think that their greater dependence upon objects<sup>1</sup> is actually closely related to a greater efficacy of the super-ego. Both characteristics have a common origin in the greater propensity women have to introject their object and set it up in themselves, so that they erect a more powerful super-ego there. This propensity, moreover, is increased precisely by their greater dependence upon their super-ego and their greater fear of it. The girl's most profound anxiety, which is that some unascertainable damage has been done to her inside by her internalized objects, impels her, as we have already seen, to be continually testing her fears by means of her relations to real objects. It impels her, that is, to reinforce her introjective tendencies in a secondary way. Again, it would seem that her mechanisms of projection are stronger than the man's, in conformity with her stronger sense of the omnipotence of her excrements and thoughts; and this is another factor which induces her to have stronger relations with the outer world and with objects in reality, partly for the purpose of controlling them by magical means.

This fact that the processes of introjection and projec-

<sup>1</sup> Along with this greater dependence upon objects goes the greater degree to which they are affected by loss of love. In his paper, 'One of the Motive Factors in the Formation of the Super-Ego in Women' (1928), Hanns Sachs has pointed out the curious fact that although women are in general more narcissistic than men, they feel the loss of love more. He has sought to explain this apparent contradiction by supposing that when her Oedipus conflict comes to an end the girl tries to cling to her father either through her desire to have a child by him or by means of oral regression. His view agrees with mine in stressing the significance that her oral attachment to her father has for the formation of her super-ego. But according to him this attachment comes about through a regression after she has been disappointed in her hopes of having a penis and of obtaining genital satisfaction from her father; whereas in my view her oral attachment to her father, or, more correctly, her desire to incorporate his penis, is the foundation and starting-point of her sexual development and of the formation of her super-ego.

Ernest Jones attributes the greater effect which the loss of her object has upon the woman to her fear that her father will not give her sexual gratification (cf. his paper, 'The Early Development of Female Sexuality', 1927). According to him, the reason why the frustration of sexual gratification is so intolerable to her—and in this matter, of course, the woman is more dependent than the man on the other party—is because it stirs up her deepest anxiety, which is her fear of aphanisis, *i.e.* of having her capacity for experiencing sexual pleasure entirely abolished.

tion are stronger in the woman than in the man not only affects, I think, the character of her object-relationships but is of importance for the development of her ego. Her dominating and deep-seated need to give herself up in complete trust and submission to the 'good' internalized penis is one of the things that underlies the receptive quality of her sublimations and interests. But her feminine position also strongly impels her to obtain secret control of her internalized objects by means of the omnipotence of her excrements and of her thoughts; and this fosters in her a sharp power of observation and great psychological insight, together with a certain artfulness and inclination towards deceit and intrigue. This side of her ego-development is brought out in the main with reference to her maternal super-ego, but it also colours her relation to her paternal one.

In *The Ego and the Id* (1923) Freud writes on p. 38: 'If they' (the object-identifications) 'obtain the upper hand and become too numerous, unduly intense and incompatible with one another, a pathological outcome will not be far off. It may come to a disruption of the ego in consequence of the individual identifications becoming cut off from one another by resistances; perhaps the secret of cases of so-called multiple personality is that the various identifications seize possession of consciousness in turn. Even when things do not go so far as this, there remains the question of conflicts between the different identifications into which the ego is split up, conflicts which cannot after all be described as purely pathological.' A study of the early stages of the formation of the super-ego and their relation to the development of the ego fully confirms this last statement. And, as far as can be seen, any further investigation of personality as a whole, whether normal or abnormal, will have to proceed along the lines Freud has indicated. It seems that the way to extend our knowledge of the ego is to learn more about the various identifications it makes and the relations it has to them. Only by pursuing this line of enquiry can we discover in what ways the ego



regulates the relations that exist between those identifications, which, as we know, differ according to the stage of development in which they have been made and according to whether they refer to the subject's mother or father or a combination of the two.

The girl is more hampered in the formation of a super-ego in respect of her mother than the boy is in respect of his father, since it is difficult for her to identify herself with her mother on the basis of an anatomical resemblance, owing to the fact that the internal organs which subserve female sexual functions and the question of possessing or not possessing children do not admit of any investigation or test by reality. This obstacle increases, as we have already learnt, the power of her terrifying mother-imago—that product of her own imaginary sadistic attacks upon her mother—who endangers the inside of her body and calls her to account for having deprived her of her children, her faeces and the father's penis, and for possessing 'bad' and dangerous excrements.

The methods of attack, based on the omnipotence of her excrements and of thoughts, which the girl employs against her mother influence the development of her ego not only directly, as it seems, but indirectly too. Her reaction-formations against her own sadistic omnipotence and the transformation of the latter into constructive omnipotence enable her to develop sublimations and qualities of mind which are the direct opposite of those traits which we have just described and which are allied to the primary omnipotence of her excrements. They incline her to be truthful, confiding, and forgetful of self, ready to devote herself to the duties before her and willing to undergo much for their sake and for the sake of other people. These reaction-formations and sublimations tend once more to make her sense of omnipotence, based upon her internalized 'good' objects, and her attitude of submission to her paternal super-ego the dominating forces in her feminine attitude.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As has already been seen, the different kinds of magic act in conjunction and are interchangeable. They are also played off against one another by the

Moreover, an essential part in her ego-development is played by her desire to employ her 'good' urine and 'good' faeces in rectifying the effects of her 'bad' and harmful excrements and in giving away good and beautiful things—a desire which is of overwhelming importance in her acts of bearing a child and giving suck to it, for the 'beautiful' child and the 'good' milk which she produces represent sublimations of her harmful faeces and dangerous urine. Indeed this desire forms a fruitful and creative basis for all those sublimations which arise out of the psychological representatives of parturition and giving suck.

The characteristic thing about the development of the woman's ego is that in the course of it her super-ego becomes raised to very great heights and much magnified and that her ego looks up to it and submits itself to it. And because her ego tries to live up to this exalted super-ego it is spurred on to all kinds of efforts which result in an expansion and enrichment of itself. Thus whereas in the man it is the ego and, with it, reality-relations which mostly take the lead, so that his whole nature is more objective and reasonable, in the woman it is the unconscious which is the dominating force. In her case, no less than in his, the quality of her achievements will depend upon the quality of her ego, but they receive their specifically feminine character of intuitiveness and subjectivity from the fact that her ego is submitted to a loved internal being. They represent the birth of a spiritual child, procreated by its father; and this spiritual father is her super-ego. It is true that even a markedly feminine line of development exhibits numerous features which spring from masculine components, but it seems as if it was the woman's dominating belief in the omnipotence of her father's incorporated penis and of the growing child inside her which renders her capable of achievements of a specifically feminine kind.

ego. The girl's fear of having 'bad' children (faeces) inside her as a result of the magical powers of her excrements acts as an incentive to her to over-emphasize her belief in the 'good' penis. Her equation of the 'good' penis with a child makes it possible for her to hope that she has incorporated 'good' children and these are an offset to the children inside her which she likens to 'bad' faeces.



At this point we cannot help comparing the mental disposition of women with that of children, who, as I maintain, are to such a much greater degree under the dominion of their super-ego and dependent upon their objects than is the adult. We all know that the woman is much more akin to the child than is the man; and yet in some respects she differs quite as much from it as he in her ego-development. The reason for this is, I think, that although she has introjected her Oedipus object much more strongly than he has, so that her super-ego and id occupy a larger share in her mental make-up and there is a certain analogy between her attitude and the child's, her ego attains a full development in virtue of the powerful super-ego within her whose example it follows and which it also in part endeavours to control and outdo.

If the girl clings in the main to the imaginary possession of a penis as a masculine attribute, her development will be radically different. In reviewing her sexual history we have already discussed the various causes which oblige her to adopt a masculine position. As regards her activities and sublimations—which she regards in her unconscious as a confirmation in reality of her possession of a penis or as substitutes for it—these are not only used to compete with her father's penis but invariably serve, in a secondary way, as a defence against her super-ego and in order to weaken it. In girls of this type, moreover, the ego takes a stronger lead and their pursuits are for the most part an expression of male potency.

As far as the girl's sexual development is concerned, we have already learnt the significance which the existence of a good mother-imago has upon the formation of a good father-imago in her. If she is in a position to entrust herself to the internal guidance of a paternal super-ego which she believes in and admires it always means that she has good mother-imagos as well; for it is only where she has sufficient trust in a 'good' internalized mother that she is able to surrender herself completely to her paternal super-ego. But in order to make a surrender of this kind she must also

believe strongly enough in her possession of 'good' things inside her body—of friendly internalized objects. Only if the child which, in her imagination, she has had, or expects to have, by her father is a 'good' and 'beautiful' child—only, that is, if the inside of her body represents a place where harmony and beauty reign<sup>1</sup>—can she give herself without reserve, both sexually and mentally, to her paternal super-ego and to its representatives in the external world. The attainment of a state of harmony of this kind is founded on the existence of a good relationship between her ego and its identifications and between those identifications themselves, and especially between her father-imago and her mother-imago.

The girl-child's phantasies in which she tries to destroy both her parents out of envy and hatred of them are the fountain-head of her deepest sense of guilt and also form the basis of her most overpowering danger-situations. They give rise to a fear of harbouring in herself hostile objects which are engaged in deadly combat (*i.e.* in destructive copulation) with each other or which, because they have discovered her guilt, are allied in enmity against her ego. If her father and mother live a happy life together the immense gratification she obtains from this fact is to a great extent due to the relief which their good relations with each other afford the sense of guilt she feels on account of her sadistic phantasies. For in her unconscious the good understanding between them is a confirmation in reality of her hope of being able to make restitution in every possible way. And if her restitutive mechanisms have been successfully established she will not only be in harmony with the external world, but—and this is, I think, a necessary condition for the attainment of such a state of harmony and of a satisfactory object-relationship and sexual development—she will be at one with her internal world and with herself. If her menacing imagos fade into the background and her kindly father-imago and mother-imago emerge to act in friendly co-operation and give her a guarantee of peace

<sup>1</sup> This phantasy is also present in the boy (cf. Chapter XII.).



and security within her own body, she can work out her feminine and her masculine components under the auspices of her introjected parents, and she will have secured a basis in herself for the full development of a harmonious personality.

### POSTSCRIPT

Since writing the above I note that a paper by Freud has appeared,<sup>1</sup> in which he more especially discusses the long period of time during which the girl remains attached to her mother, and endeavours to isolate that attachment from the operation of her super-ego and her sense of guilt. This, in my judgment, is not possible, for I think that the girl's anxiety and sense of guilt which arise from her aggressive impulses go to intensify her primary libidinal attachment to her mother at a very early age. Her multifarious fears of her phantastic imagos (her super-ego) and of her 'bad', real mother force her, while she is still quite small, to find protection in her 'good', real mother. And in order to do this she has to over-compensate for her primary aggression towards the latter.

Freud also points out that the girl feels hostility, too, towards her mother and is afraid of 'being killed (eaten up?) by her'. In my analysis of female patients of every age I have found that their fear of being devoured, cut to bits or destroyed by their mother springs from the projection of impulses of their own of the same sadistic kind against her, and that those fears are at the bottom of their earliest anxiety-situations. Freud also states that female persons who are strongly attached to their mother have more especially reacted with rage and anxiety to enemas and anal irrigations which she has administered to them in their childhood. Expressions of affect of this sort are, as far as my experience goes, caused by their fear of sustaining anal attacks from her—a fear which represents the projection of their anal-sadistic phantasies on to her. I am in agreement

<sup>1</sup> 'Female Sexuality' (1932).

with Freud's view that in females the projection in early childhood of hostile impulses against their mother is the nucleus of paranoia in later life. But, according to my observations,<sup>1</sup> it is the imaginary attacks they have made upon the interior of their mother's body by means of destructive excrements that poison, burn and explode, which more particularly give rise to their fear of pieces of stool as persecutors and of their mother as a terrifying figure as a result of projection.

Freud believes that the girl's long attachment to her mother is an exclusive one and takes place before she has entered the Oedipus situation. But my experience of analysis of small girls has convinced me that their long-drawn-out and powerful attachment to their mother is never exclusive and is bound up with Oedipus impulses. Moreover, their anxiety and sense of guilt in relation to their mother also affects the course of those Oedipus impulses; for in my view, the girl's defence against her feminine attitude springs less from her masculine tendencies than from her fear of her mother. If the small girl is too frightened of her mother she will not be able to attach herself strongly enough to her father and her Oedipus complex will not come to light. In those cases, however, in which a strong attachment to the father has not been established until the post-phallic stage, I have found that the girl has nevertheless had positive Oedipus impulses at an early age, but that these often did not emerge to view. These early stages of her Oedipus conflict still bear a somewhat phantastic character, since they are in part centred round the penis of her father; but in part they are already concerned with her real father.

In some of my earlier papers I have adduced as primary factors in the withdrawal of the girl from her mother the grudge she feels against her for having subjected her to oral frustration (a factor which is also noticed by Freud in the paper under discussion) and her envy of the mutual

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my papers, 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928) and 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930).



oral gratification which, on the strength of her earliest sexual theories, she imagines that her parents obtain from copulation. These factors, assisted by the equation of breast with penis, incline her to turn towards her father's penis in the second half of her first year; so that her attachment to her father is fundamentally affected by her attachment to her mother. Freud, I may say, also points out that the one is built up upon the other, and that many women repeat their relation to their mother in their relation to men.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE EFFECTS OF EARLY ANXIETY-SITUATIONS ON THE SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOY

EARLY analysis shows that in its first stages the boy's sexual development runs parallel with that of the girl.<sup>1</sup> As in her case, the oral frustration he experiences reinforces his destructive tendencies against his mother's breast; and as in her case, his withdrawal from the breast, and the onset of his oral-sadistic impulses are followed by what I have called the period of maximal sadism, in which his aim is to attack the inside of his mother's body.

#### *The Feminine Phase*

In this phase the boy has an oral-sucking fixation on his father's penis, just as the girl has. This fixation is, I consider, the basis of true homosexuality in him. This view would agree with what Freud has said in *Eine Kindheits-erinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci* (1910), where he comes to the conclusion that Leonardo's homosexuality goes back to an excessive fixation upon his mother—ultimately upon her breast—and thinks that this fixation became displaced on to the penis as an object of gratification. In my experience every boy moves on from an oral-sucking fixation upon his mother's breast to an oral-sucking fixation upon his father's penis.

<sup>1</sup> In so far as this is so those stages will be only very briefly alluded to here. For a more detailed discussion of them the reader is referred to Chapters VIII. and IX. of this book.



In addition to this, the boy imagines that his mother incorporates his father's penis, or rather, a number of them, inside herself; so that side by side with his relations to his father and his father's penis in reality he develops an imaginary relation to his father's penis inside his mother. Since his oral desires for his father's penis are one of the motives of his attacks on his mother's body—for he wants to take by force the penis which he imagines as being inside his mother and to injure her in so doing—his attacks in part also represent his earliest situations of rivalry with her, and thus form the basis of his femininity complex.<sup>1</sup>

The forcible seizure of his father's penis and of the excrements and children out of his mother's body makes him into his mother's rival and gives rise to an intense fear of retaliation. His having destroyed the interior of his mother's body in addition to robbing it becomes, furthermore, a source of deepest anxiety to him. And the more sadistic his imaginary destruction of her body has been the greater will be his dread of her as a rival.

### *Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict*

The boy's genital impulses, which, though at first overlaid by his pre-genital ones and made to serve their ends, do nevertheless substantially affect the course of his sadistic phase, lead him to take his mother's body and genitals as a sexual object. He thus desires to have sole possession of her in an oral, anal and genital sense and attacks his father's penis within her with all the sadistic means at his disposal. His oral position, too, gives rise to a great amount of hatred against his father's penis in consequence of the frustration he has experienced from that quarter. Ordinarily his destructive impulses towards his father's penis are

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the phenomena that make their appearance in connection with the feminine phase of the male individual, I may refer the reader to my paper 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928). Cf. also Karen Horney, 'The Flight from Womanhood' (1926), and Felix Boehm, 'The Femininity-Complex in Men' (1929).

very much stronger than the girl's, since his longing for his mother as a sexual object induces him to concentrate his hatred more intensely upon it. Moreover, it has already been a special object of anxiety to him in the earliest stages of his development, for his direct aggressive impulses towards it have aroused a proportionate fear of it in him. This fear once again reinforces his hatred of it and his desire to destroy it.

As we have seen in the last chapter, the girl retains her mother's body as the direct object of her destructive impulses for a much longer time and in a much more intense degree than the boy; and her positive impulses towards her father's penis—both the real one and the imaginary one inside her mother's body—are normally much stronger and enduring than his. In his case, it is only during a certain period of that early stage in which his attacks upon his mother's body dominate the picture that his mother is the actual object of them. It is very soon his father's penis, supposedly inside her, which to an ever greater extent draws to itself his aggressive tendencies against her.

### *Early Anxiety-Situations*

Besides the fears which the boy feels in consequence of his rivalry with his mother, his fear of his father's dangerous internalized penis stands in the way of his maintaining a feminine position. This latter fear, together, in especial, with the growing strength of his genital impulses, cause him to give up his identification with his mother and to fortify his heterosexual position. But if his fear of his mother as a rival and his fear of his father's penis are excessive, so that he does not properly overcome the feminine phase, that phase will be a serious bar to his becoming established in a heterosexual position.

It is, furthermore, of great importance for the final outcome of the boy's development whether or no his early mental life has been governed by a fear of his father and mother combined in copulation and forming an insepar-



able unit hostile to himself.<sup>1</sup> Anxiety of this kind makes it more difficult for him to maintain any position, and brings on danger-situations which I should be inclined to consider as the deepest causes of sexual impotence in later life. These specific danger-situations arise from the boy's fear of being castrated by his father's penis inside his mother—that is, of being castrated by his conjoint, 'bad' parents—and his fear, often strongly evinced, of having his own penis cut off from retreat there and shut in inside his mother's body.<sup>2</sup>

It has more than once been pointed out in these pages that the anxiety-situations resulting from sadistic attacks made by children of both sexes on the inside of their mother's body fall into two categories. In the first, the mother's body becomes a place filled with dangers which give rise to all sorts of terrors. In the second, the child's own inside is turned into a place of this kind, in virtue of the child's introjection of its dangerous objects, especially its copulating parents, and it becomes afraid of the perils and threats within itself. The anxiety-situations belonging to these two categories exert an influence upon one another, and, as I say, are present in the girl as well as in the boy; and we have already examined the methods of mastering anxiety which are common to both. Briefly put, they are as follows: The child contends with its internalized 'bad' objects by means of the omnipotence of its excrement, and also receives protection against them from its 'good' objects. At the same time it displaces its fear of internal dangers into the outer world by projection and there finds evidence to disprove their truth.

But besides this, each sex has its own essentially different modes of mastering anxiety. The boy develops his sense

<sup>1</sup> The aetiological significance of such fears in the psychoses has been pointed out in Chapters VIII. and IX.

<sup>2</sup> This fear has a bearing, I think, on various forms of claustrophobia. It seems certain that claustrophobia goes back to the fear of being shut up inside the mother's dangerous body. In the particular dread of not being able to extricate the penis from the mother's body it would seem that this fear has been narrowed down to a fear on behalf of the penis.

of the omnipotence of excreta less strongly than the girl, replacing it in part by the omnipotence of the penis; and in connection with this his projection of his fear of internal dangers is different from the girl's. The specific mechanism he employs for overcoming his fear both of internal and external dangers, at the same as he obtains sexual gratification, is determined by the fact that his penis, as an active organ, is used to master his object and that it is accessible to tests by reality. In gaining possession of his mother's body by means of his penis he proves to himself his superiority not only over his dangerous external objects but over his internal ones as well.

### *Sadistic Omnipotence of the Penis*

In the male child the omnipotence of excrements and thoughts becomes partly centred in the omnipotence of the penis and, especially in the case of excrements, partly replaced by it. In his imagination he endows his own penis with destructive powers and likens it to ferocious and devouring beasts, death-dealing weapons, and so on. His belief that his urine is a dangerous substance and his equation of his poisonous and explosive faeces with his penis go to make the latter the executive organ of his sadistic tendencies. Furthermore, certain physiological occurrences show him that his penis really can change its appearance, and he takes this as a proof of its omnipotence. Thus his penis and his sense of omnipotence become linked together in a way which is of underlying importance for his activity and his mastery of anxiety. In child analysis we often come across the idea of the penis as a 'magic wand', of masturbation as magic and of erection and ejaculation as a tremendous heightening of the sadistic powers of the penis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Abraham, 'Ejaculatio Praecox' (1917). In his 'Beiträge zur Analyse des Sadismus und Masochismus' (1913) Federn has discussed the question of how the phenomena of active sadism arise in the male individual and has come to the conclusion that 'the active male organ-component that is awaking becomes transformed by means of unconscious mechanisms, of which



The interior of the mother's body, which succeeds to the breast as the child's object, soon takes on the significance of a place which contains many objects (at first represented by the penis and excrements). In consequence the boy's phantasies of taking possession of his mother's body by copulating with her form the basis of his attempts to conquer the external world and to master anxiety along masculine lines. Both as regards the sexual act and sublimations he displaces his danger-situations into the outer world and overcomes them there through the omnipotence of his penis.

In the case of the girl, her belief in her father's 'good' penis and her fear of his 'bad' one fortify her introjective tendencies. Thus the test by reality against her 'bad' objects, as carried out by the woman, is ultimately situated within herself once again. In the boy, belief in an internalized 'good' mother and fear of 'bad' objects there assist him to displace his reality-tests outwards (*i.e.* into his mother's body). His internalized 'good' mother adds to the libidinal attraction which his real mother has for him and increases his wishes and hopes of combating and vanquishing his father's penis inside her by means of his own penis. A victory of this kind would also be a proof that he is able to get the better of the internalized assailants in his own body as well.<sup>1</sup>

This concentration of sadistic omnipotence in the penis is of fundamental importance for the masculine position of the boy. If he has a strong primary belief in the omnipotence of his penis he can pit it against the omnipotence

symbolic representation is an important one, into sadism; or more correctly, the tendencies which flow from that component are turned into sadistic desires. At the same time all the active tendencies that have already been unfolded in the child become reactivated.'

<sup>1</sup> In some instances I have been able to ascertain that the boy uses his own penis as a weapon against his father's internalized penis as well by turning it inwards. He likens his stream of urine to his penis, and looks upon it as a stick or whip or sword with which he vanquishes his father's penis inside himself. I have also frequently come across a phantasy in which the boy pulls out his own penis to such a length that he can take it into his mouth—in one instance, into his anus. This phantasy is once again actuated by his wish to engage his penis in a direct struggle with his super-ego.

of his father's penis and take up the struggle against that dreaded and admired organ. In order for a process of concentration of this kind to take effect it seems that his penis must be strongly cathected by the various means of enforcement adopted by his sadism;<sup>1</sup> and the capacity of his ego to tolerate anxiety and the strength of his genital—ultimately his libidinal—impulses<sup>2</sup> will also be of decisive importance. But if, when the genital impulses come to the fore, the ego should make too sudden and forcible a defence against the destructive impulses, this process of focussing sadism in the penis will be interfered with.<sup>3</sup>

### *Incentives to Sexual Activity*

The boy's hatred of his father's penis and the anxiety arising from the above-mentioned sources incite him to get possession of his mother in a genital way and go to increase his libidinal desire to copulate with her. Moreover, as he gradually overcomes his sadism towards her he looks upon his father's penis inside her more and more not only as a source of danger to his own penis but as a source of danger to her body as well and feels that he must destroy it inside her for that reason. Another factor which acts as an incentive to having coitus with her (and which, in the girl, fortifies her homosexual position) is his epistemophilic instinct, which has been intensified by his anxiety.<sup>4</sup> In this connection he regards his penetrating penis as an organ of perception and likens it to the eye<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to Ferenczi ('Attempt to Formulate a Genital Theory', 1922) pre-genital erotisms are displaced on to genital activities in virtue of a process of amphimixis.

<sup>2</sup> Reich has pointed out that the constitutional strength of the genital erotism of the individual is an important factor in the final outcome of his development (cf. his *Die Funktion des Orgasmus*, 1927).

<sup>3</sup> Should genital feelings set in too soon and thus lead the ego to make a premature and over-strong defence against the destructive impulses, severe developmental inhibitions may result (cf. my paper, 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego', 1930).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Mary Chadwick, 'Über die Wurzel der Wissbegierde' (1925).



or the ear or a combination of the two, and he wants by means of it to discover what sort of destruction has been done inside his mother by his own penis and excrements and by his father's, and to what kind of perils his penis is exposed there.

Thus we see that the boy's impulsion to overcome anxiety is also an incentive to him to obtain genital gratification and is a promoting agency in his development even at a time when he is still under the supremacy of his sadism and the measures he employs are wholly of a destructive nature. And indeed those destructive measures themselves become in part pressed into the service of his restitutive tendencies for the purpose of rescuing his mother from his father's 'bad' penis inside her, although in doing so they still act in a forcible and injurious way.

### *'The Woman with a Penis'*

The child's belief that its mother's body contains the penis of its father leads, as we have already seen, to the idea of 'the woman with a penis'. The sexual theory that the mother has a female penis of her own is, I think, the result of a modification by displacement of more deeply seated fears of her body as a place which is filled with a number of dangerous penises and of the two parents engaged in dangerous copulation. 'The woman with a penis' always means, I should say, the woman with the father's penis.<sup>1</sup>

Normally, the boy's fear of his father's penises inside

<sup>1</sup> In his 'Ödipuskomplex und Homosexualität' (1927) Felix Boehm has come to the conclusion that the phantasies which men often have that the woman's vagina conceals a big, 'dangerous' and moving penis—a female penis—receive their pathogenic value from the fact that they are unconsciously connected with ideas of the hidden presence in the mother's vagina of the father's huge and terrifying penis. In an earlier paper, 'Homosexualität und Polygamie' (1920), Boehm has also pointed out that men often have a desire to meet their father's penis inside their mother and that this desire is based on aggressive impulses against their father's penis. Their impulse to attack his penis inside their mother's vagina and the repression of that aggressive impulse are important factors, Boehm thinks, in making them homosexual.

his mother decreases as his relationship to his objects develops and as he goes forward in the conquest of his own sadism. Since his fear of the 'bad' penis is to a great extent derived from his destructive impulses against his father's penis, and since the character of his imagos depends largely on the quality and quantity of his own sadism, the reduction of that sadism and with it the reduction of his anxiety will lessen the severity of his super-ego and will thus improve the relations of his ego both towards his internalized, imaginary objects and towards his external, real ones.

### *Later Stages of the Oedipus Conflict*

If, side by side with the imago of the combined parents, imagos of the single father and mother, especially the 'good' mother, are sufficiently strongly operative, the boy's growing relationship to objects and adaptation to reality will have the result that his phantasies about his father's penis inside his mother will lose their power, and his hatred, already less in itself, will be more strongly directed to his real object. This will have the effect of separating out his imago of the combined parents still more completely; and his mother will now be pre-eminently the object of his libidinal impulses, while his hatred and anxiety will in the main go to his real father (or father's penis) or, by displacement, to some other object, as in the case of animal phobias. The separate imagos of his mother and father will stand out more distinctly and the importance of his real objects be increased; and he will now enter upon a phase in which his Oedipus tendencies and his fear of being castrated by his real father come into prominence.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the earliest anxiety-situations are, I have found, still latent in him to a greater or less degree, in spite of all the modifications they have undergone in the course

<sup>1</sup> When this happens it is a sign that the separation of his combined parent-imago has been successfully achieved, and that his infantile psychotic anxiety has been modified into a neurosis.



of his development;<sup>1</sup> and so, too, are all the defensive mechanisms and mechanisms belonging to later stages, which arise from those anxiety-situations. In the deepest layers of his mind, therefore, it is always by the 'bad' father's penis belonging to his mother that he expects to be castrated. But so long as his early anxiety-situations are not too powerful and, above all, so long as his mother stands for the 'good' mother to a sufficient extent, her body will be a desirable place, though a place which can only be conquered with greater or less risk to himself, according to the magnitude of the anxiety-situations involved. This element of danger and anxiety, which in every normal man allies itself to copulation, is an incentive to sexual activity and increases the libidinal gratification he gets from copulating; but if it exceeds a certain limit it will have a disturbing effect in that connection and even prevent him from being able to perform the sexual act at all. In his deepest unconscious phantasies copulation involves overpowering or doing away with his father's penis inside the woman. To this struggle with his father inside his mother are attached, I think, those sadistic impulses which are normally present when he takes possession of her in a genital way. Thus, while his original displacement of his father's penis to the inside of his mother's body makes her a permanent anxiety-object for him—though the degree to which this is so varies very greatly from person to person—it also increases the attraction which women have for him very considerably, because it is an incentive to him to overcome his anxiety in regard to them.

In the normal course of things, as the boy's genital tendencies grow stronger and he overcomes his sadistic impulses, his phantasies of making restitution begin to occupy a wider field. As has already been seen, phantasies of this kind in regard to his mother already exist while his sadism is still in the ascendant and take the form of destroying his father's 'bad' penis inside her. Their first and main object is his mother, and the more she has stood for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter IX.

the 'good' object to him the more readily do his restitutive phantasies attach themselves to her imago.<sup>1</sup> This is especially clearly seen in play analyses. When the boy's reactive tendencies become stronger he begins to play in a constructive way. In games of building houses and villages, for instance, he will symbolize the restoration of his mother's body and his own<sup>2</sup> in a way that corresponds in every detail with the acts of destruction he has played at in an earlier stage of his analysis, or still plays at in alternation with his constructive games. He will start building a town by putting houses together in all sorts of ways, and will set up a toy man—representing himself—as a policeman to regulate the traffic, and this policeman will always be on the look-out to see that cars or carts do not run into one another, or houses get damaged or pedestrians run over; whereas in former games the town was frequently being damaged by colliding vehicles, and the people knocked down. In a still earlier period, perhaps, his sadism took a more direct form and he used to wet, burn and cut up all sorts of articles which symbolized his mother's inside and its contents, *i.e.* his father's penis and children, while at the same time these destructive acts represented the damage he wanted his father's penis to do there as well. As a reaction to these sadistic phantasies in which the violent and overpowering penis (his father's and his own), as represented by the moving cars, destroys his mother and injures the children inside, as represented by the toy people, he now has phantasies of restoring her body—the town—in all the respects in which he previously damaged it.

### *Restitutive Tendencies and Sexual Activities*

It has repeatedly been said in these pages that the sexual act is a very important means of mastering anxiety for both

<sup>1</sup> That the boy's restitutive tendencies are directed to the 'good' object, and his destructive ones to the 'bad' object, has already been made clear in another connection.

<sup>2</sup> Since the boy's anxiety-situations in regard to his mother's inside and his anxiety concerning his own body are inter-related and interdependent, his phan-



sexes. In the early stages of the child's development the sexual act, in addition to its libidinal purposes, serves to destroy or injure the object (though positive tendencies are already at work behind the scenes). In later stages it serves to restore the mother's injured body and thus to master anxiety and guilt.

In discussing the underlying sources of the girl's homosexual attitude, we have seen how important to her is the idea of possessing a 'beneficent' penis and constructive omnipotence in the sexual act. What has been said there applies equally to the heterosexual attitude of the man. Under the supremacy of the genital stage he attributes to his penis in copulation the function not only of giving the woman pleasure, but of making good in her all the damage which it and his father's penis have done. In analysing boys we find that the penis is supposed to perform all kinds of curative and cleansing functions. If, during his period of sadistic omnipotence, the boy has used his penis in imagination for sadistic purposes—such as flooding, poisoning or burning things with his urine—he will, in his period of making restitution, regard it as a fire-extinguisher, a scrubbing-brush or a container of healing medicines. Just as his former belief in the sadistic qualities of his own penis involved a belief in the sadistic power of his father's penis, so now his belief in his 'good' penis involves a belief in his father's 'good' penis; and just as then his sadistic phantasies went to transform his father's penis into an instrument of destruction for his mother, so now his restitutive phantasies and sense of guilt go to turn it into a 'good' and beneficent organ.<sup>1</sup> As a result, his fear of his 'bad' super-ego

phantasies of restoring his mother's body apply in every particular to the restoration of his own. We shall presently go on to consider this aspect of his phantasies of restitution.

<sup>1</sup> The boy's sense of guilt towards his mother and his fear that his father's 'bad' penis may do her harm contribute in no small degree to his endeavour to restore his father's penis as well and give it back to her, and to unite the two in an amicable fashion. In certain instances this desire can become so dominating that he will relinquish his mother as a love-object and make her over to his father entirely. This situation disposes him to go over to a homosexual position; in which case his homosexuality would serve the purpose of making restitution towards his father's penis, whose function it would then be to restore his mother and give her gratification.

derived from his father becomes lessened, and he can now give up identifying himself with his 'bad' father in relation to his real objects (an identification which is in part based on his identification of himself with his anxiety-object) and can identify himself more strongly with his 'good' father. If his ego is able to tolerate and modify a certain quantity of destructive feeling against his father and if his belief in his father's 'good' penis is strong enough, he can maintain both his rivalry with his father (which is essential for the establishment of a heterosexual position) and his identification with him. His belief in his father's 'good' penis increases the sexual attraction he feels for women, for in his phantasy they will then contain objects which are not so very dangerous and objects which—on account of his homosexual attitude in which the 'good' penis is a love-object—are actually desirable.<sup>1</sup> His destructive impulses will retain his father's rival penis as their object and his positive impulses will be mainly directed to his mother.

### *Significance of the Feminine Phase in Heterosexuality*

The final attainment of a heterosexual position depends upon the boy's early feminine phase of development having run a favourable course and having been successfully overcome. In an earlier paper<sup>2</sup> I pointed out that the boy often compensates the feelings of hate, anxiety, envy and inferiority that spring from his feminine phase by reinforcing his pride in the possession of a penis and that he displaces that pride on to intellectual activities.<sup>3</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> Where the boy's fear of the 'bad' penis or, not infrequently, his inability to tolerate his own sadism heighten his belief in the 'good' penis to an exaggerated degree, not only in regard to his father's penis inside his mother, but in regard to his super-ego, his attitude towards women may become quite distorted. The heterosexual act will serve first and foremost to satisfy his homosexual desires, and the womb will be nothing more than something which contains the 'good' penis.

<sup>2</sup> 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

<sup>3</sup> In her paper, 'Über die Wurzel der Wissbegierde' (1928), Mary Chadwick considers that the boy is reconciled to his inability to have a child by the exercise of his epistemophilic instinct and that scientific discovery and intellectual



displacement forms the basis of a very inimical attitude of rivalry towards women and affects his character-formation in the same way as envy of the penis affects theirs. The excessive anxiety he feels on account of his sadistic attacks on his mother's body becomes the source of very grave disturbances in his relations to the opposite sex. But if his anxiety and sense of guilt become less acute it will be those very feelings which give rise to the various elements of his phantasies of restitution that will enable him to have an intuitive understanding of women.

This early feminine phase has yet another favourable effect on the boy's relations to women in later life. The difference between the sexual tendencies of the man and the woman necessitates, as we know, different psychological conditions of gratification for each and leads each to seek the fulfilment of different and mutually incompatible requirements in their relations to one another. Usually, the woman wants to have the object of her love always with her—in the last analysis, inside her; whereas the man, owing to his outwardly-orientated psycho-sexual tendencies and his method of mastering anxiety, is inclined to change his love-object frequently (though his desire to keep it in so far as it represents his 'good' mother makes against that tendency). Should he, in spite of these difficulties, nevertheless be able to be in touch with the mental needs of the woman, it will be to a large extent because of his earliest identification with his mother. For in that phase he introjects his father's penis as a love-object, and it is the desires and phantasies he has in this connection which, if his relation to his mother is a good one, help him to understand the woman's tendency to introject and preserve what she loves.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the wish to have children by his

achievements take the place for him of having a child. It is, according to her, this displacement on to the mental plane of his envy of women for being able to have a child which makes him take up an attitude of rivalry to them in matters of thought.

<sup>1</sup> Edoardo Weiss, in his paper 'Über eine noch unbeschriebene Phase der Entwicklung zur heterosexuellen Liebe' (1925), states that the heterosexual choice of object made by the adult male results from the projection of his own femininity,

father, which springs from that phase, leads him to regard the woman as his child; and he plays the part of the bountiful mother towards her.<sup>1</sup> In this way he also satisfies his partner's love-wishes arising from her strong attachment to her mother.—Thus, and only thus, by sublimating his feminine instinctual components and surmounting his feelings of envy, hatred and anxiety towards his mother, will he be able to consolidate his heterosexual position in the stage of genital supremacy.

We have already learnt why it is that, when the genital stage has been fully attained, a necessary condition for sexual potency should be that the boy believes in the 'goodness' of his penis—that is, in his capacity to make restitution by means of the sexual act.<sup>2</sup> This belief has its concrete basis in a belief that the inside of his body is in a good state. In both sexes the anxiety-situations which arise from supposed destructive events, attacks and encounters inside the subject's body and which merge with anxiety-situations relating to similar events inside the mother's body constitute the most profound danger-situations of all. Fear of castration, which is only a part—though an important part—of the anxiety felt about the whole body, becomes, in the male individual, a dominating theme that overshadows all his other fears to a greater or less extent. But this is precisely because one of the deepest sources to which disturbances in his sexual potency go back is his anxiety about the interior of his body. The house or town which the boy is so keen to build up again in his play signifies not only his mother's renewed and intact body but his own.

and he believes that it is owing to this mechanism of projection that the adult man retains in part a maternal attitude towards his female partner. He also points out that the woman attains her final heterosexual position in a corresponding way, by giving up her masculinity and situating it in the man she loves.

<sup>1</sup> Reich has shown that in many patients the penis assumes the rôle of the mother's breast, and semen, that of milk (cf. his *Die Funktion des Orgasmus*, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Such a conviction grows steadily stronger in analysis in proportion as the severity of his super-ego, anxiety and sadism diminish and the genital stage emerges more clearly, with an accompanying improvement in his relation to his object and in the relations between his super-ego, ego and id.



*Secondary Reinforcement of Penis-Pride*

In describing the development of the boy, I have drawn attention to certain factors which tend, as I think, to increase yet more the central importance which the penis possesses for him. They may be summed up as follows: (1) The anxiety arising from his earliest danger-situations—his fears of being attacked in all parts of his body and inside it—which include all his fears belonging to the feminine position, are displaced on to the penis as an external organ, where they can be more successfully mastered. The increased pride the boy takes in his penis, and all that this involves, may also be said to be a method of mastering those fears and disappointments which his feminine position lays him open to more particularly.<sup>1</sup> (2) The fact that the penis is a vehicle first of the boy's destructive and then of his creative omnipotence, enhances its importance as a means of mastering anxiety. In thus ministering to his sense of omnipotence, assisting him in his task of testing by reality and promoting his object-relationships—in fact, in subserving the all-important function of mastering anxiety—the penis is brought into specially close relation with the ego and is made into a representative of the ego and the conscious;<sup>2</sup> while the interior of the body, the imagos and the faeces—what is invisible and unknown, that is—are compared to the unconscious. Moreover, in analysing male patients, whether boys or men, I have found that as their fear of their bad imagos and faeces (*i.e.* the unconscious) that were supreme inside them diminished, their belief in their own sexual potency was strengthened and the development of their ego gained ground.<sup>3</sup> This latter effect is partly due to the fact that the boy's lessened fear of his 'bad' super-ego and the 'bad' contents of his body enables him to identify himself better with his 'good' introjected

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928).

<sup>2</sup> This view is supported by a well-established fact of analytic observation, namely, that the penis and male potency stand for masculine activity in general.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my paper, 'A Contribution to the Theory of Intellectual Inhibition' (1931).

objects, and thus allows of a further enrichment of his ego.

As soon as his confidence in the constructive omnipotence of his penis is firmly enough established, his belief in the power of his father's 'good' penis inside him will form the basis of a secondary belief in his omnipotence which will support and strengthen the line of development already laid down for him by his own penis. And, as has been said, the result of his growing relationship to objects will be that his unreal imagos recede into the background, while his feelings of hatred and fear of castration come into sharper relief and fix themselves on to his real father. At the same time his restitutive tendencies are increasingly directed towards external objects and his methods of mastering anxiety become more realistic. All these advances in his development run parallel with the growing supremacy of his genital stage and characterize the later stages of his Oedipus conflict.

### *Disturbances of Sexual Development*

Stress has already been laid on the child's phantasy of its parents perpetually joined in copulation as a source of very intense anxiety-situations. Under the influence of such a phantasy its mother's body represents above all a union of mother and father which is extremely dangerous and which is directed against itself. If the separation of this combined parent-imago does not take place to a sufficient degree in the course of its development, the child will be overtaken by severe disturbances both of its object-relationships and of its sexual life. A predominance of this kind of the combined parent-imago goes back, as far as my experience goes, to disturbances in the earliest relations of small children to their mother, or rather, to her breast.<sup>1</sup> Although its effects are very fundamental in children of both sexes, they are already different for each in the earliest stages of development. In the following pages we shall

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.



confine our attention to the boy and examine how these terrifying phantasies gain the ascendancy and in what way they influence his sexual development.<sup>1</sup>

In my analyses of boys and adult men I have found that when strong oral-sucking impulses have combined with strong oral-sadistic ones, the infant has turned away from his mother's breast with hatred very early.<sup>2</sup> His early and intense destructive tendencies against her breast have led him to introject a 'bad' mother for the most part; and his sudden giving up of her breast has been followed by an exceedingly strong introjection of his father's penis. His feminine phase has been governed by feelings of hatred and envy towards his mother, and at the same time, as a result of his powerful oral-sadistic impulses, he has come to have an acute hatred and a correspondingly acute fear of his internalized father's penis.<sup>3</sup> His intensely strong oral-sucking impulses have brought on phantasies of an uninterrupted and everlasting process of taking in nourishment, while his sadistic impulses have led him to believe that in receiving nourishment and sexual gratification by copulating with his father's penis his mother has suffered much pain and injury and that the interior of her body is filled to bursting point with his huge, 'bad' penises which are destroying her in all sorts of ways. In his imagination she has become not only the 'woman with a penis' but a kind of receptacle of his father's penises and of his dangerous excrement which is equated with them.<sup>4</sup> In this way he has

<sup>1</sup> For a description of their application to the girl see the previous chapter.

<sup>2</sup> In some of these cases the sucking period has been short and unsatisfactory; in others the child had only been given the bottle. But even where the period of sucking has to all appearances been satisfactory, the child may nevertheless have turned away from the breast very soon and with feelings of hatred and may have introjected his father's penis very strongly. In this case, his behaviour must have been determined by constitutional factors.

<sup>3</sup> The boy's exaggerated hatred of his father's penis is based on excessively strong destructive phantasies directed towards his mother's breast and body; so that here, too, his early attitude to his mother influences his attitude to his father.

<sup>4</sup> The imagos which have arisen from these phantasies are usually not only quite at variance with the real picture of the boy's mother but entirely obscure it. Here cause and effect reinforce one another. Owing to the too strong operation of the boy's earliest anxiety-situations, the growth of his object-relationship and

displaced on to his mother great quantities of hatred and anxiety which attached to his father and his father's penis.<sup>1</sup> Thus a strong and premature oral sadism on the one hand encourages the child to make attacks upon his parents joined in copulation and to be terrified of their imago in that aspect, and on the other prevents him from creating a good mother-imago which would have sustained him against his early anxiety-situations, laid the foundation of a good super-ego in him (in the form of helping figures)<sup>2</sup> and led him to adopt a heterosexual position.

Next, there are the consequences which follow when the feminine phase is too strongly governed by sadism. The boy's inordinately strong introjection of his father's huge 'bad' penis make him believe that his body is exposed to the same dangers from within as his mother's is. And his introjection of his hostile parents joined in copulation, together with his very feeble introjection of a 'good' mother, work in the same direction. In giving rise to an excess of anxiety concerning his own inside, these introjective processes pave the way not only for serious mental ill-health but for severe disturbances in his sexual development. As we have seen, the possession of 'good' contents in the body and with it, on the genital level, the possession of a 'good' penis are a pre-condition of sexual potency. If the boy's attacks on his mother's breast and body have been exceptionally intense, so that, in his imagination, she has been destroyed by his father's penis and his own, he will have all the more need of a 'good' penis with which to restore her; and he will have to have especial confidence in his potency in order to dissipate his terrors of his mother's adaptation to reality have been arrested. As a consequence of this, his world of objects and reality cannot mitigate the anxiety belonging to those earliest anxiety-situations, so that these continue to dominate his mind. I have found that in such cases the child's relation to reality has remained permanently impaired.

<sup>1</sup> In the previous chapter we have traced an analogous process of displacement in the girl. Where her hatred and envy are mainly concerned with her father's penis which her mother has incorporated, she displaces those feelings, which were originally mostly directed to her mother, on to his penis, with the result that her attitude to men is open to severe disturbances.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my paper, 'Personification in the Play of Children' (1929).



dangerous and endangered body, filled with his father's penises. Yet it is precisely his fear on account of his mother and the contents of his own body which prevents him from believing in his possession of a 'good' penis and sexual potency. The cumulative effect of all these factors may be to make him turn away from women as objects of love, and, according to what his early experiences have been, either to suffer from disturbances of potency in his heterosexual position or to become homosexual.<sup>1</sup>

### *Adoption of Homosexuality*

This process of displacement, in which all that is terrifying and uncanny is located in the interior of the woman's body, is often accompanied by another process which seems to be a necessary condition for the complete establishment of a homosexual position. In the normal attitude, the boy's penis represents his ego and his conscious, as opposed to the contents of his body and his super-ego which represent his unconscious. In his homosexual attitude this significance is extended by his narcissistic choice of object to the penis of another male, and this penis now serves as a counter-proof against all his fears concerning the penis inside him and the interior of his body. Thus in homosexuality one mode of mastering anxiety is that the ego endeavours to deny, control or get the better of the unconscious by over-emphasizing reality and the external world and all that is tangible and perceptible to consciousness.

In such cases I have found that where the boy has had a homosexual relation in early childhood he has had a good opportunity of moderating his feelings of hatred and fear of his father's penis and of strengthening his belief in the 'good' penis. Upon such a relation, moreover, all his homosexual affairs in later life will rest. It is designed to provide him with a number of assurances, of which I will mention a few of the most common: (1) that his father's penis, both internalized and real, is not a dangerous persecutor either

<sup>1</sup> In extreme cases his libido will be unable to maintain any position whatever.

(a) for him or (b) for his mother; (2) that his own penis is not destructive; (3) that his fears, as a small child, lest his sexual relations with his brother or brother-substitute should be discovered and he should be turned out of the house, castrated or killed<sup>1</sup> have no foundation, since his homosexual acts are followed by no evil consequences; (4) that he has got secret confederates and accomplices, for in early life his sexual relations with his brother (or brother-substitute) meant that the two were banded together to destroy their parents separately or combined in copulation. In his imagination his partner in love will sometimes take on the rôle of his father, with whom he undertook secret attacks upon his mother during the sexual act and by means of it (one of the parents being thus played off against the other), and sometimes that of his brother who, with himself, set upon and destroyed his father's penis inside his mother and himself.

The feeling (based upon having sadistic masturbation phantasies in common) of being leagued with another against the parents by means of the sexual act, a feeling which is, I think, of general importance for the sexual relations of small children, is closely bound up with paranoid mechanisms.<sup>2</sup> Where such mechanisms are very strongly operative the child will have a strong bias towards finding allies and accomplices in his libidinal position and object-relationship. The possibility of gaining his mother on to his side against his father—ultimately, that is, of destroying his father's penis inside her by copulating with her—may become a necessary condition for his adoption of a heterosexual position; and it may enable him when he is grown up to maintain that position in spite of his having marked paranoid traits. On the other hand, if his fear of his mother's dangerous body is too strong and his good mother-*imago* has not been able to develop, his phantasies of allying himself with his father against his mother and of

<sup>1</sup> Behind this fear lurks the fear of his mother as a rival who tries to make him responsible for the castration and theft of his father's penis.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter VII.



joining with his brother against both parents, will incline him to establish a homosexual position.

The child's impulse to play off his objects against one another and to get power over them by securing secret allies has its roots, as far as I can see, in phantasies of omnipotence in which, by means of the magical attributes of excrements and thoughts, poisonous faeces and flatus are introduced into his objects in order to dominate or destroy them. In this connection the child's faeces are the instruments of his secret attacks upon the inside of his objects and are regarded by him as evil-doing objects or animals who are acting on behalf of his ego. These phantasies of grandeur and omnipotence play a great part in delusions of persecution and reference and in delusions of being poisoned. They make the patient afraid of being attacked by his objects in the same secret manner as he attacked them,<sup>1</sup> and sometimes, too, afraid of his own excrements, in case they should turn upon his ego in a hostile and treacherous way. In analysing both children and adults I have also come across a fear that their faeces have in some way assumed an independent existence and are no longer under their control, and are doing harm to their internal and external objects against the will of the ego. In such instances the faeces were likened to all sorts of small animals and vermin such as rats, mice, flies, fleas and so on.<sup>2</sup>

Where the individual is most occupied with a paranoid anxiety in regard to stool and penis as persecutors, his love-object of the same sex will represent first and foremost an ally against his persecutors. His libidinal desire for a 'good' penis will be strongly over-compensated and will serve the purpose of concealing his feelings of hate and fear towards the 'bad' penis. Should such a compensation

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> My five-year-old patient Franz, for instance, who revealed marked psychotic traits in his analysis, was afraid in the dark of a multitude of rats and mice who would come out of the next-door room into his bedroom and advance upon him as he lay in bed, one lot attacking him from above, the other from below. They represented faeces coming from his parents and entering his anus and other openings of the body as a result of his own anal-sadistic attacks upon his parents.

fail, his hatred and fear of his love-object will come out and effect a paranoic reversal of the beloved person into the persecutor.<sup>1</sup>

These mechanisms, which are dominant in cases of a paranoic character, enter, though to a lesser degree, into every homosexual activity. The sexual act between men always in part serves to gratify sadistic impulses and to confirm the sense of destructive omnipotence; and behind the positive libidinal relation to the 'good' penis as an external love-object there lurk, to a greater or less extent, according to the amount of hatred present, not only hatred of the father's penis but also destructive impulses against the sexual partner and the fear of him that they give rise to.

In his 'Homosexualität und Ödipuskomplex' (1926) Felix Boehm has turned his attention to 'the part played by that aspect of the Oedipus-Complex which consists of the child's hatred of his father and of his death-wishes and active castration-wishes against him'. He has shown that in performing homosexual acts the male individual very frequently has two aims: (1) to make his partner impotent for the heterosexual act, in which case it is mostly merely a question of keeping him away from women, and (2) to castrate him, in which case he wants to get possession of his partner's penis as well so as to increase his own sexual potency with women. As regards the first aim, my own observations lead me to believe that his wish to keep other men away from women (*i.e.* his mother or sister) is based not only on a primary jealousy of his father but on a fear of the risks his mother incurs in copulating with him. Since those risks arise not only from his father's penis but from his own sadistic penis, he is provided with a very strong motive for adopting a homosexual position. In this position, as I have found from analyses both of boys and men, he has in his unconscious made a compact with his father and brothers by which they shall all abstain from having intercourse with his mother (and sisters) so as to spare her and shall seek compensation for that abstention in one an-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter IX.



other.<sup>1</sup> As regards the second aim, I am in full agreement with Boehm's view. The child's desire to castrate his father so as to get his penis and be potent in sexual intercourse with his mother urges him towards a homosexual position. In some instances I have ascertained that his aim was not only to get possession of an especially potent penis but to store up an enormous amount of semen which, according to his phantasies, is necessary in order to give his mother sexual gratification.<sup>2</sup> In addition to this, he wants to put 'good' penises and 'good' semen inside himself so as to make the interior of his body whole and well. And this wish is heightened in the genital stage by his belief that if his inside is unimpaired he will be able to give his mother 'good' semen and children as well—a situation which goes to increase his potency in the heterosexual position. If, on the other hand, his sadistic tendencies predominate, his desire to get possession of his father's penis and semen by means of the homosexual act will also in part have a heterosexual aim. For in satisfying himself with his sadistic father he will have all the more power to destroy his mother by copulating with her.

It has been said more than once that the epistemophilic instinct provides a motive force in general for the performance of the sexual act. But where the individual obtains gratification of this instinct in connection with homosexual activities he employs it in part to increase his efficiency in the heterosexual position. The homosexual act is designed to realize his early childhood desire of having an opportunity of seeing in what respect his father's penis differs

<sup>1</sup> Freud has drawn attention to the fact that in some cases what contributes to a homosexual choice of object are feelings of rivalry that have been surmounted and aggressive tendencies that have been repressed (cf. 'Certain Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality', 1922). Sadger has emphasized the boy's rivalry with his father and his desire to castrate him as factors in homosexuality ('Ein Fall von multipler Perversion mit hysterischen Absenzen', 1910). Ferenczi has pointed out that homosexuals entertain cruel death-wishes against their father as well as lustful-cruel phantasies of attack upon their mother ('On the Nosology of Male Homosexuality', 1914).

<sup>2</sup> The disproportion between the huge penis and vast quantities of semen which he thinks are needed to satisfy his mother and the smallness of his own penis is one of the things that help to render him impotent in later life.

from his own and to find out how it behaves in copulating with his mother. He wants to know how to grow more adept and potent in sexual intercourse with his mother.<sup>1</sup>

*Case Material—Mr. B—*

I shall now proceed to give extracts from a case history in order to illustrate the significance of some of the above-discussed factors in the adoption of the homosexual position. B—, a man in the middle of the thirties, came to me for treatment on account of a severe inhibition in work and deep depressions. His inhibition in work, which was a fairly long-standing one, had been increased to such a degree by a certain event in his life which I shall presently relate that he had been obliged to give up the research work he was engaged in and to resign his post as a teacher. It appeared that although the development of his character and his ego had been perfectly successful and he was unusually gifted intellectually, he suffered from severe disturbances of mental health. His fits of depression went back to early childhood but had become so acute in recent years that they had brought on a general state of depression and had led him to cut himself off from other people to a great extent. He was afraid—quite without cause—that his appearance put people off, and this added more and more to his dislike of society. He also suffered from a severe doubting-mania, which covered the field of his intellectual interests to an ever-widening extent and was particularly painful to him.

Behind these more manifest symptoms I was able to elicit the presence of a profound hypochondria<sup>2</sup> and strong ideas of persecution and reference, which at times took on the character of delusion but to which he seemed curiously indifferent. He was able to conceal from everyone about

<sup>1</sup> Boehm refers (*loc. cit.*) to a patient who used, among other things, to find out in his homosexual affairs with men what their 'sexual technique' with women was.

<sup>2</sup> B—'s continual worry and preoccupation about his appearance proved to be a displacement outwards of his worry about the interior of his body and of his hypochondriacal anxiety concerning it.



him his ideas of reference and persecution and his hypochondriacal anxiety and even to some extent his serious obsessional symptoms. This extraordinary power of dissimulation went along with his paranoid characteristics, which were very strong. Although he felt that he was being observed and spied upon by people and was very suspicious of them, his psychological subtlety was so great that he knew how to hide his thoughts and feelings completely. But alongside of this dissembling and calculating strain in him there was a great freshness and spontaneity of feeling which sprang from his positive object-relationship and went back originally to strong optimistic feelings in the depths of his mind; these latter had also helped him to conceal his illness from view, but in the last few years they had lost almost all their efficacy.

B—— was a true homosexual. While having good relations to women (and to men) as human beings, as sexual objects he rejected them so completely that he was quite unable to understand how they could be supposed to possess any attraction whatever.<sup>1</sup> From a physical point of view they were something strange, mysterious and uncanny to him. The shape of their bodies repelled him, especially their breasts and buttocks and their lack of a penis.<sup>2</sup> His dislike of their breasts and buttocks was based on intensely strong sadistic impulses. He had phantasies of beating those 'sticking out' parts of their body until they became, as it were, 'beaten in' and thus 'reduced', and then perhaps, he said, he would be able to love women. These phantasies were determined by his unconscious idea that the woman was so full of the father's penises and dangerous excrements equated to the penis, that they had burst her open and were protruding out of her body. Thus his hatred of her 'sticking out' parts was really aimed at his father's

<sup>1</sup> Once or twice in his life he had had sexual intercourse with women but he had never got any real gratification from it. His chief motives for engaging in an ephemeral affair of this kind were curiosity, a wish to do what other, heterosexual, men did, and, in especial, a dislike of wounding the feelings of the other party, who had in each case been the more willing one.

<sup>2</sup> We shall see later on why this lack terrified him so much.

internalized and re-emerging penises.<sup>1</sup> In his imagination the interior of the woman's body was an infinitely large space where every kind of danger and death lurked, and she herself was only a kind of case containing terrifying penises and dangerous excrements. Her delicate skin and all her other feminine attributes he regarded as a quite superficial cover for the destruction that was going on inside her, and, although they pleased him, he dreaded them all the more as being so many signs of her deceitful and treacherous nature.

By likening the penis to pieces of stool my patient extended his displacement of the fear excited by his father's penis on to his mother's body still further and applied it to his father's poisonous and dangerous excrements as well. In this way he sought to cover up and put out of sight inside his mother all the things that he hated and feared. That this far-reaching process of displacement had failed can be inferred from the fact that B—— became once more aware of his concealed anxiety-objects in the shape of the female breasts and buttocks. They symbolized persecutors who were issuing out of the woman's body and observing him; and, as he told me with evident dislike and anxiety, he would never dare even to strike or attack them because he was too frightened of touching them.

At the same time as he had thus displaced on to his mother's body all those things which aroused his fear, so that it became an object of horror to him, he had idealized the penis and the male sex in a very high degree. To him the male, in whom all was manifest and clearly brought to view and who concealed no secrets within himself, was alone the natural and beautiful object.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, he had very strongly repressed everything that had to do with the

<sup>1</sup> As has been said in Chapter IV., the head, arms, hands and feet of the woman are often regarded in the unconscious as the father's internalized penis that has come out again; her limbs—the pair of legs, feet or arms or even fingers—often signify both internalized parents.

<sup>2</sup> Since the possession of a penis was so necessary to him for overcoming anxiety, all B——'s fears about the interior of the woman's body were increased by the fact of her having no such external organ.



inside of his own body and had concentrated his interest in all that was on its surface and visible about it, especially the penis. But how strong were his doubts even on this head could be seen from the fact that when he was about five years old he had asked his nurse which she thought was worst—'in front or behind' (meaning penis or anus)—and had been very much taken aback when she had answered 'in front'. He also remembered when he was about eight years old standing at the top of the stairs and looking down them and hating himself and the black stockings he had on.<sup>1</sup> His associations showed that his parents' house had always seemed specially gloomy to him—'dead', in fact—and that he held himself responsible for this in its symbolic signification of his mother's body and his own, brought to ruin by his dangerous excrements (the black stockings), which had damaged both her and him.—In consequence of his extensive repression of his 'inside' and his displacement of it on to his 'outside', B—— had come to hate and fear the latter, not only in regard to his personal appearance, though this was a continual source of worry and care to him, but to other allied matters. For instance, he had the same loathing for certain articles of dress, especially his underclothes, that he had had for his black stockings and felt as though they were his enemies and were hemming him in and weighing him down by clinging so closely to his body.<sup>2</sup> They represented his internalized objects and excrements which were persecuting him from within. In virtue of the displacement of his fears of internal dangers into the external world, his enemies inside him had been transformed into enemies outside him.

<sup>1</sup> Looking down meant looking inside himself. In other cases I have been able to discover that looking into the distance stood for introspection. It would seem that for the unconscious nothing is more distant and more unfathomable than the inside of the mother's body and, still more, the inside of one's own body.

<sup>2</sup> In other cases, too, I have found that things on the outside of the body represent things inside it. My six-year-old patient, Günther, used always to be making paper snakes, winding them round his neck and then tearing them up. He did this in order to master his fear not only of his father's penis which was strangling him from outside, but of his father's penis which was suffocating him and killing him from within.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the structure of the case. The patient had been brought up on the bottle. Since his libidinal components had not been gratified by his mother, his oral-sucking fixation on the breast had been impeded. Owing to this frustration, too, his destructive impulses against the breast had been increased and he had transformed that part of the body into dangerous beasts and monsters in his imagination. (In his unconscious he likened female breasts to harpies.) This process had been assisted by his equation of the breast with his father's penis, which, he thought, had been put inside her body and was re-emerging from it. He had, moreover, very soon begun to liken the mouthpiece of the bottle to a penis and, in consequence of his frustration in regard to the breast, to turn to it with special eagerness as an object of gratification for his oral-sucking desires. His adoption of a homosexual attitude had been very greatly helped on by the fact that he had been seduced very early in life—some time approximately in his second year—by his brother, who was about two years his senior. Since the act of *fellatio* gratified his hitherto starved oral-sucking desires, this event led him to become too strongly fixated on the penis. Another factor was that his father, who had up till then been a very undemonstrative man, became more affectionate under the influence of his youngest son. The little boy had been determined to win his love and he had succeeded. Analysis showed that he regarded this victory as a proof that he was able to turn his father's 'bad' penis into a 'good' one. And his efforts to effect a transformation of this kind and thus dissipate a number of fears became in later years one of his motives for having affairs with men.

B—— had two brothers. For Leslie, the one who had seduced him, who was two years older than himself, he had had a great admiration and love even as a small boy, and he made him the representative of the 'good' penis—partly, no doubt, on account of the early gratification of his oral cravings which he had received from him through the sexual act. His greatest ambition was to become worthy of



his friendship and to follow assiduously in his footsteps; and, in fact, he chose the same profession.—To his other brother, David, who was older than himself by four years, he had quite a different attitude. This brother was his father's son by a former marriage, and B—— felt, probably correctly, that his mother showed a preference for her own sons over him. He did not like this brother and had managed to get the upper hand of him as a small child in spite of the difference in their ages. This was partly due to David's masochistic attitude, partly to his own great mental superiority over him. He vented his sadistic impulses towards the 'bad' penis upon this brother, with whom he had also had sexual relations in early childhood,<sup>1</sup> and at the same time he regarded him as the dangerous mother in whom were contained his father's penises. His brothers, it will be seen, were substitutes for both parent-imagos and it was towards them that he activated his relations to those imagos; for whereas he was devoted to his mother in real life and loved her much more than his father, he was possessed in phantasy, as we know, by imagos of the magical 'good' penis (his father) and of the terrifying mother. He never got to like David even in later life, and this was partly because, as analysis showed, he felt so very guilty towards him.

While, therefore, a number of factors were present to encourage B——'s adoption of a homosexual attitude, a number of other external ones were already very early working against his establishment of a heterosexual position. His mother was very fond of him, but he soon found out that she was not really loving towards his father and had an aversion to the male genital in general. He was most likely right in his impression that she was frigid and disapproved of his own sexual desires, and her very marked love of order and cleanliness gave the same effect. The

<sup>1</sup> B——'s sexual relations with his brothers were discontinued after the first period of childhood; nor had he any conscious recollection of them. On the other hand, he remembered quite clearly and in great detail having tormented his brother David very much, and this cruel behaviour was closely related, as analysis showed, with the sexual activities he had forgotten about.

nurses he had had as a small child were also antipathetic towards anything that was sexual or instinctual. (The reader will remember his nurse's answer that 'in front' was worse than 'behind'.) Another thing which made against the establishment of a heterosexual position was his having had no girl playmates in early childhood. There is no doubt that his fear of the mysterious interior of the woman's body would have been greatly lessened had he been brought up with a sister, for then he would have satisfied his sexual curiosity concerning the female genitals much earlier. As it was, it was not until he was about twenty years old that, on looking at a picture of a naked woman, he first consciously realized in what respect the female body differed from the male. It turned out in analysis that the voluminous and spreading skirts which women wore at that time increased a thousandfold his idea of the huge, unknowable and perilous interior of their bodies. His 'ignorance' about these matters—an ignorance which sprang from his anxiety but which had been encouraged by the external factors described above—had helped to make him reject the female as a sexual object.

In my description of the development of the male individual I have shown that the centring of his sadistic omnipotence in his penis is an important step in the establishment of a heterosexual position, and that in order to effect such a step his ego must have acquired sufficient capacity to tolerate his sadism and anxiety in earlier stages of his development. In B—— this capacity was small. His belief in the omnipotence of his excrements was stronger than is usual in boys.<sup>1</sup> His genital impulses and his feelings of guilt, on the other hand, had come to the fore very early and had soon brought with them a good relationship to his objects and a satisfactory adaptation to reality. His prematurely strengthened ego had in consequence undertaken a violent repression of his sadistic impulses, especially those

<sup>1</sup> For the same reason he had fairly strong feminine characteristics and his sublimations were of a predominantly feminine cast. This point will receive notice later on.



directed to his mother, so that these could not get into sufficient contact with his real objects and remained for the most part—again, most of all as far as his mother was concerned—attached to his phantastic imagos.<sup>1</sup> The result of this was that side by side with the good relation he had to his objects of both sexes there still went a profound and dominating fear of their bad and phantastic imagos, and these two attitudes towards his objects ran a parallel but separate course without really impinging upon one another at any point.

Not only could B—— not, for the above reasons, employ his penis as the executive organ of his sadism against his mother; he could not give effect to his desires to restore her by means of his 'good' penis in the sexual act.<sup>2</sup> As regards his father's penis his sadism was much less strongly repressed. Nevertheless, he could not give sufficient effect to his direct Oedipus tendencies because the factors discussed above worked too powerfully against the attainment of a heterosexual position. His hatred of his father's penis could thus not be modified in a normal way. It had to be in part over-compensated by a belief in the 'good' penis, and this formed the basis of his homosexual position.

In the course of his flight from all that was anal and all that had to do with the inside of the body, and assisted by his very strong oral-sucking fixation on the penis and by the factors already described, B—— had very early in life developed a great admiration for the penis of other boys—an admiration which in certain instances amounted almost to worship. But analysis showed that in consequence of his intense repression of anal matters the penis had taken on anal qualities in a high degree. He thought of his own

<sup>1</sup> B——'s unsuccessful super-ego formation (*i.e.* the overstrong action of his earliest anxiety-formations) had not only led to severe disorders in his mental health, to an impairment of his sexual development and to an inhibition of his capacity to work, but was the reason why his object-relationships, while in themselves good, were at times subjected to grave disturbances.

<sup>2</sup> In the foregoing chapter mention has been made of one or two factors which enable the individual of either sex to restore his or her object by means of the sexual act.

penis as inferior and ugly (as 'dirty' through and through, it came out), and his admiration for the penis of other men and boys was subject to certain conditions. A penis which did not fulfil these conditions was repulsive to him, for it then took on all the characteristics of his father's dangerous penis and of 'bad' pieces of stool. In spite of this limitation, however, he had attained a fairly stable homosexual position. He had no conscious sense of guilt or inferiority about his homosexual activities, for in them his restitutive tendencies, which had not been able to come out in the heterosexual position, unfolded their capacity to the full.

B——'s erotic life was dominated by two types of object. The first, to which he had turned again and again ever since his schooldays, consisted of boys, and later on men, who were not attractive and who felt, with reason, that they were unpopular. This type answered to his brother David. B—— got no pleasure from having sexual relations with persons of this type because his sadistic impulses came into play too powerfully, and he was himself aware that he used to make the other feel his superiority and torment him in all sorts of ways. At the same time, however, he would be a good friend to him and would exert a favourable mental influence on him and help him in every way. The second type answered to his other brother, Leslie. He used to fall very deeply in love with this kind of person and would have a real adoration for his penis.<sup>1</sup>

Both types served to gratify B——'s restitutive tendencies and to allay his anxiety. In his relations to the first type, copulating meant restoring his father's and his brother David's penis, which, on account of his powerful sadistic impulses against them, he imagined he had destroyed. At the same time he identified himself with his inferior and castrated object, so that his hatred of the object was also directed towards himself, and his restitution of the penis of that object implied a restitution of his own

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion he had an affair with a third type of person who corresponded to his father. It happened against his will, but he could not avoid it and it aroused great anxiety in him.



penis. But in the last analysis his restitutive tendencies towards the penis served the purpose of restoring his mother; for it transpired that his having castrated his father and brother meant having attacked the children inside his mother and that he felt deeply guilty towards her on account of this. In restoring his father's and his brother's penis he was endeavouring to give his mother back an unhurt father, unhurt children and an unhurt inside. The restoration of his own penis meant, furthermore, that he had a 'good' penis and could give his mother sexual gratification.

In B——'s relations to the Leslie type his desires to make restitution came less into prominence, for in this case he was concerned with the 'perfect' penis. This 'perfect' penis, which was the object of his intense admiration, stood for a whole number of magical counter-proofs against all his fears. And since he identified himself with his loved object in this case as well, the other's possession of a 'perfect' penis was a proof that his own penis was 'perfect' too; and it also showed that his father's penis and his brother's were intact and strengthened his belief in the 'good' penis in general and thus in the unharmed state of his mother's body.—In this relation to the admired penis, too, his sadistic impulses found an outlet, though an unconscious one; for here as well his homosexual activities signified a castration of his loved object, partly on account of his jealousy of him and partly because he wanted to get hold of his 'good' penis so as to be able in all respects to take his father's place with his mother.

Although B——'s homosexual position had been established so early and so strongly, and although he consciously rejected a heterosexual one, he had always unconsciously kept the heterosexual aims in view towards which, as a small boy, he had striven so ardently in his imagination. To his unconscious his various homosexual activities represented so many bypaths leading to a heterosexual goal.

The standards imposed by his super-ego upon his sexual activities were very high. In copulation he had to make

good every single thing he had destroyed inside his mother. His work of restoration began, for the reasons we have seen, with the penis, and there, too, it ended. It was as though a person wanted to put up a particularly fine house but was filled with doubts as to whether he had well and truly laid the foundations. He would keep on trying to make those foundations more solid and would never be able to get to work on the rest of the building.

Thus B——'s belief in his ability to restore the penis was the foundation of his mental stability, and when that belief was shattered he fell ill. This was what happened: Some years before, his beloved brother Leslie had lost his life on a journey of exploration. Although his death had affected B—— very deeply it had not upset his mental health. He was able to bear the blow because it did not arouse his sense of guilt or undermine his belief in his constructive omnipotence to any great extent. Leslie had been for him the possessor of the magical 'good' penis, and he, B——, could transfer his belief in him and love of him on to someone else as a substitute. But now his brother David fell ill. B—— devoted himself to him during his illness and hoped to effect his cure by the exertion of a strong and favourable influence upon him. But his hopes were cheated and David died. It was this blow that shattered him and brought on his illness. Analysis showed that this second blow had hit him much harder than the first because he had a strong sense of guilt towards his eldest brother. Above all, his belief that he could restore the damaged penis had been undermined. This meant that he had to abandon hope about all the things which in his unconscious he was endeavouring to restore—in the last resort his mother and his own body. The severe inhibition in his work that overtook him was another consequence of his loss of hope.

We have seen why it was that his mother could not become the object of his restitutive tendencies, as carried out by copulation, and therefore could not be a sexual object for him. She could only be the object of his tender



emotions. But even so his anxiety and sense of guilt were too great; and not only were his object-relations exposed to severe disturbances, but his sublimatory tendencies were much impeded. It turned out that B——, who was consciously a good deal preoccupied about his mother's health—although, as he said himself, she was not exactly an invalid, but 'delicate'—was in his unconscious a complete slave to this preoccupation. He gave expression to it in the transference-situation by being in continual fear, just before his analysis broke off for the holidays (and, as it turned out later, before every week-end, and even between one day and the next), that he would never see me again, as some fatal accident might have overtaken me in the meantime. This phantasy, which recurred again and again with all sorts of variations, had the same main theme running through it—that I should be knocked down and run over by a motor-car in a crowded street. This street was in fact a street in his home town in America and played a great part in his childhood memories. When he used to go out with his nurse he had always crossed it in the fear—as analysis showed—that he would never see his mother again. Whenever he was in a state of deep depression he used to say in his analysis that things could never be 'right again' and he would never be able to work any more unless certain things which had happened in the world since he was a small child could be made not to have happened—as, for instance, that all the traffic which had passed along that street should not have passed along it. To him, as to the children whose analyses I have reported in an earlier part of this book, the movement of cars represented the act of copulation between his parents, which in his masturbation phantasies he had transformed into an act fatal to both parties, so that he became a prey to the fear that his mother and (because of his introjection of the 'bad' penis and of his combined parents) he himself would be wrecked by his father's dangerous penis incorporated within her. Hence his manifest fear that she and he would be run over by a car. In contrast to his native town, which

he thought of as a dark, lifeless and ruined place in spite of the fact—or because of the fact, as his analysis showed—that there was a lot of traffic there (*i.e.* continual copulation between his father and mother), he pictured an imaginary city full of life, light and beauty,<sup>1</sup> and sometimes found his vision realized, though only for a short time, in the cities he visited in other countries. This far-off visionary city represented his mother once more made whole and reawakened to a new life, and also his own restored body. But the excess of his anxiety made him feel that a restoration of this kind could not be accomplished, and this, too, was the cause of his inhibition in work.

During the time when B—— was still able to work he was engaged in writing a book in which he set down the results of his scientific researches. This book, which he had to give up writing when his inhibition in work grew too strong, had the same meaning for him as the beautiful city. Each separate bit of information, each single sentence, denoted his father's restored penis and unharmed children, and the book itself represented his unimpaired mother and his own restored body. It emerged in analysis that it was his fear of the 'bad' content of his own body which was the principal hindrance to his creative powers. One of his hypochondriacal symptoms was a feeling of immense emptiness inside. On the intellectual plane it took the form of a complaint that things that were valuable and beautiful and interesting to him lost their value and were 'worn out' and taken away from him in some way. The deepest cause of this complaint turned out to be his fear that in ejecting his bad imagos and dangerous excrements he might have lost those contents of his body which were 'good' and 'beautiful'.

The most powerful motive force of his creative work came from his feminine position. In his unconscious a certain condition was imposed: not unless his body was

<sup>1</sup> Here again every detail of his beautiful make-believe city pictured a restoration and further beautification and perfection of his mother's body and his own, which, as he imagined, had suffered damage and destruction.



filled with good objects—actually with beautiful children<sup>1</sup>—could he create, *i.e.* bring children into the world. In order to obey this condition he had to get rid of the ‘bad’ objects inside him (but then he felt empty); or else he had to turn them into ‘good’ ones, just as he wanted to turn his father’s penis and his brother’s into ‘good’ penises. If he had been able to do this he would have gained the assurance that his mother’s body and her children and his father’s penis were all restored too; then his father and mother would have been able to live together in amity and to give each other complete sexual satisfaction, and he himself, in identification with his ‘good’ father, could have given his mother children and could have consolidated his heterosexual position.

When my patient once more took up his book, after an analysis of fourteen months’ duration, his identification with his mother came to the fore very clearly. It showed itself in the transference-situation in phantasies of being my daughter. He remembered that when he was a small boy he longed to be a girl, because he would then have been able to love his mother in a sexual way. For he would not have had to be afraid of hurting her with his penis, which was hateful to her and which he himself felt to be dangerous.<sup>2</sup> But in spite of his identification with his mother and his markedly feminine characteristics—characteristics which came out in his book as well—he had not been able to maintain the feminine position. This was a great stumbling-block in the way of his creative activities, which had always to some extent been inhibited.

As his identification with his mother and his desire to

<sup>1</sup> In the last chapter we have seen that the girl’s belief in the omnipotence of excrements is more strongly developed than the boy’s and that this factor has a specific influence on the character of her sublimations. I have shown the current of sublimation which flows from the ‘bad’ and ugly piece of stool to the ‘beautiful’ child. B——’s belief in the omnipotence of his penis as the executive organ of sadism was not adequately effective and his belief in the omnipotence of excrements was relatively stronger; consequently his sublimations were of a distinctly feminine type.

<sup>2</sup> B—— recollected having repeatedly tried as a small boy to squeeze his penis between his thighs so as to make it vanish from view.

be a woman became more prominent in his analysis his inhibition in work gradually diminished. His wish to have children and, concurrently, his creative capacities had been checked by his fear of his internalized objects in the first instance. For his fear of his mother as a rival was directed first and foremost towards his internalized 'bad' mother who was united with his father. It was to those internalized objects, too, that his intense fear of being watched and observed referred. He had, as it were, to preserve every thought from them, for each thought represented a 'good' bit inside him—a child.<sup>1</sup> For this reason he would commit his thoughts to paper as rapidly as possible so as to protect them from the 'bad' objects which would get in his way in writing. He had to undertake a separation of 'good' objects from 'bad' ones inside his body and also to transform the 'bad' ones into 'good' ones. His work in writing his book and the whole process of mental production entailed by it were likened in his unconscious to restoring the inside of his body and creating children. These children were to be his mother's, and he restored his 'good' mother within himself by filling her with beautiful restored children and by carefully trying to preserve those re-created objects from the 'bad' objects inside him, which were his parents combined in copulation and his father's 'bad' penis. In this way he made his own body sound and beautiful as well, because his 'good', beautiful and unimpaired mother would in her turn protect him from the 'bad' objects inside him. With this 'good' restored mother B—— was able also to identify himself.<sup>2</sup> The beautiful children (thoughts, knowledge) with which, in his imagination, he peopled his inside were the children

<sup>1</sup> His fear of his bad imagos, which made him endeavour to deny and subdue his unconscious to a more than ordinary degree, had a great deal to do with the inhibition of his productive powers. He could never abandon himself completely to his unconscious, and so an important source of creative energy was closed to him.

<sup>2</sup> The 'pure' and 'untouched' woman is the mother who has not been sullied or destroyed by the father's penis and by his dangerous excrements and who can therefore give her lover 'good, healing and pure' substances out of her own intact body.



which he had conceived in identification with his mother as well as the children which he had begot on her as the 'good' mother—that is, the mother who gave him milk and thus helped him to get a sound and potent penis. And it was not until he was able to adopt and sublimate this feminine position that his masculine components became more effective and fruitful in his work.

In proportion as his belief in his 'good' mother grew stronger and his paranoid and hypochondriacal anxiety and also his depressions became less intense, B—— became increasingly able to carry on his work, at first showing every sign of anxiety and compulsion but later doing it with much greater ease. Hand in hand with this there went a steady diminution of his homosexual symptoms. His adoration of the penis grew less and his fear of the 'bad' penis, which had hitherto been overlaid by his admiration for the 'good' (the beautiful) penis, came to light. In this phase we became acquainted with a particular fear, namely, that his father's 'bad' internalized penis had got possession of his own by thrusting its way inside it and controlling it from within.<sup>1</sup> B—— felt that he had thus lost command over his own penis and could not use it in a 'good' and productive way. This fear had come up very strongly when he was in the age of puberty. At that time he was trying with all his might to keep himself from masturbating. In consequence he was having nocturnal emissions. This started a fear in him that he could not control his penis and that it was possessed by the devil. He also thought

<sup>1</sup> In my analyses of male patients of all ages I have more than once come across this special danger-situation in which the father's 'bad' penis fills up the subject's own penis from within and thus takes complete possession of it. For instance, a small patient of mine once put a pencil with a pencil-cap into the fire. He wanted to burn out of the pencil-cap something 'bad', something strong and hard, that was contained in it. The pencil-cap represented his own penis and the 'bad' thing (the pencil itself) that had to be burnt out of it was his father's penis. On another occasion he put a bit of wood in the fire and at the same time sharpened his pencil, explaining that he did this so that the 'bad' wood should burn better. It turned out that in his imagination the bit of wood and the pencil belonged together and stuck into each other and fought with one another. Upon being analysed, this danger-situation sets free anxiety of a specially intense kind and it is, I think, a serious obstacle to sexual potency in the man.

that it was because it was possessed by the devil that it could change its size and become larger or smaller, and he attributed all the changes it underwent in connection with his development to the same cause.

This fear had greatly contributed to his dislike of his own penis and to his feeling that it was inferior, in the sense of being anal, 'bad' and destructive. There arose in connection with it an important impediment, too, to his adoption of a heterosexual position. Since he must suppose that his father's 'bad' penis would always be present while he had coitus with his mother and would force him to commit bad actions, he was obliged to keep away from women. It now became evident that the excessive emphasis he had put upon his penis as the representative of the conscious and what was visible and his manifold repression and denial of the existence of the interior of his body had failed in this point as well. As soon as this set of fears had been analysed, B——'s capacity for work was still further increased and his heterosexual position fortified.

At this point in the progress of his analysis my patient had to stop coming to me for some time as he was obliged to go back to America to settle his affairs; but he intended to return for further treatment. Up to this point his analysis had occupied 380 hours and lasted about two years. The results so far were that his deep depressions and his inhibition in work had been almost completely removed and his obsessional symptoms and anxiety, both of the paranoid and hypochondriacal variety, considerably diminished. These results justify us, I think, in believing that a further period of treatment will enable him fully to establish a heterosexual position. But in order to bring this about it is clear from the analysis that has already been done that his fear of his unrealistic mother-imago will have to be still further reduced, so that his real objects and his imaginary ones, so widely separated in his mind, may come closer together, and his growing belief in his 'good' restored mother and in his possession of a 'good' penis, which has up till now for the most part been directed



towards his internalized mother and helped to remove his inhibition in work, may have its full effect upon his relations to women as sexual objects. Furthermore, his fear of his father's 'bad' penis must be still further reduced so as to strengthen his identification with his 'good' father.

In the case under discussion it will be seen that the factors upon whose stronger operation depends the patient's complete change from homosexuality to heterosexuality are the same factors as those whose presence has been mentioned in the first part of this chapter as a necessary condition for the firm establishment of a heterosexual position. In tracing the development of the normal male individual I pointed out there that the foundation of it was the supremacy of the good mother-*imago* which assists the boy to overcome his sadism and works against all his various anxieties. As in the case of his fears on this head, the boy's desire to restore his mother's body and his desire to restore his own interact, the fulfilment of the one being essential to the fulfilment of the other. In the genital stage they are a pre-condition for his attainment of sexual potency. An adequate belief in the 'good' contents of his body which oppose and neutralize its 'bad' contents and excrement seems to be necessary in order that his penis, as the representative of his body as a whole, shall produce 'good' and beneficent semen. This belief, which coincides with his belief in his capacity to love, depends upon his having sufficient belief in his 'good' *imagos*, especially in his 'good' mother and in her unimpaired and beneficent body.

When he has attained the full genital level the male individual returns in copulation to his original source of gratification, his bountiful mother, who now gives him genital pleasure as well; and, partly as a return gift, partly as a reparation for all the attacks he has made on her from the time he did injury to her breast, he gives her his 'beneficent' semen which shall endow her with children, restore her body and afford her oral gratification as well.

The anxiety and sense of guilt that are still present in him have increased and deepened and lent shape to his primary libidinal impulses as an infant at the breast, giving his attitude towards his object all that wealth and fulness of feeling which we call love.



## APPENDIX

### THE SCOPE AND LIMITS OF CHILD ANALYSIS

**I**N regard to the adult the function of Psycho-Analysis is clear. It is to correct the unsuccessful course which his psychological development has taken. In order to do this it must aim at harmonizing his id with the requirements of his super-ego. In effecting an adjustment of this kind it will also put his now strengthened ego in a position to satisfy the requirements of reality as well.

But what about children? How does analysis affect a life which is still in the process of development? In the first place, analysis resolves the sadistic fixations of the child and thus decreases the severity of its super-ego, at the same time lessening its anxiety and the pressure of its instinctual desires; and, as its sexual life and super-ego both mount to a higher stage of development its ego expands and becomes able to reconcile the requirements of its super-ego with those of reality as well, so that its new sublimations are more solidly founded and its old ones shed their spasmodic and obsessive character.

At the age of puberty the child's detachment from its objects, which should go along with a heightening of its internal standards, can only take effect if its anxiety and sense of guilt do not overstep certain limits. Otherwise its behaviour will have the character of flight rather than of genuine detachment; or it will be unable to get away at all and will remain for ever fixated to its original objects.

If the child's development is to have a satisfactory out-

come the severity of its super-ego must become mitigated. Greatly as the standards proper to each age may differ from one another, the attainment of them depends in each case upon the same fundamental condition, namely, upon an adjustment between the super-ego and the id and the consequent establishment of an adequately strong ego. Analysis, in helping to effect an adjustment of this kind, follows and supports the child's natural line of growth at every stage of its development. At the same time it regulates the child's sexual activities. By lessening the child's anxiety and feelings of guilt it restricts those activities in so far as they are compulsive and promotes them in so far as they have led to a fear of touching. In thus affecting the factors that underlie a faulty development as a whole, analysis also enables the child freely to unfold the beginnings of its sexual life and personality.

In these pages I have endeavoured to show that the further analysis penetrates into the underlying strata of the mind the more the pressure of the super-ego is relieved. But we must ask ourselves whether it is not possible that a deep-going analytic procedure of this kind may not greatly diminish the function of the super-ego or even abolish it altogether. We have seen that libido, super-ego and object-relationship interact in their development, and that the libidinal and destructive impulses, besides being fused together exert a reciprocal action upon each other; and we have also seen that when anxiety is aroused as a result of sadism the demands of those two sets of impulses are heightened.<sup>1</sup> Thus the anxiety which emanates from the earliest danger-situations not only exerts a great influence upon the libidinal fixation-points and sexual experiences of the child, but is actually bound up with them and has itself become an element of those libidinal fixations.

Psycho-analytic experience has shown that even a very thoroughgoing treatment will only lessen the strength of

<sup>1</sup> Whereas a certain modicum of anxiety in the child increases its need for love and forms its capacity for loving, excess of anxiety has a paralysing effect on them.



the child's pre-genital fixation-points and sadism, never remove them altogether. Only a portion of its pre-genital libido can be converted into genital libido. This familiar fact is equally true, in my opinion, of the super-ego. The anxiety which the child has as a result of its destructive impulses and which answers both in quantity and quality to its sadistic phantasies, merges with its fear of dangerous internalized objects,<sup>1</sup> and leads to definite anxiety-situations; and these anxiety-situations are attached to its pre-genital impulses, and, as I have endeavoured to show, can never be entirely done away with. Analysis can only weaken their power, in so far as it reduces the child's sadism and anxiety. Hence it follows that the super-ego belonging to the early stages of childhood never completely relinquishes its functions. All that analysis can do is to relax the pre-genital fixations and diminish anxiety and thus assist the super-ego to move forward from pre-genital stages to the genital stage. Every advance made in the reduction of the severity of the super-ego means that the libidinal impulses have gained power in relation to the destructive ones and that the libido has attained the genital stage in a fuller measure.

I should like for a moment to consider the factors that bring on psycho-neurotic illness. I shall not discuss those very numerous cases in which the illness has gone back to the early childhood of the individual, sometimes changing its features in the course of his life, sometimes keeping to its original character, but shall confine myself to those cases in which the outbreak of the illness has apparently dated from a particular moment in his life. Here, too, analysis shows that the illness was there already in a latent form, but that, as a result of certain events, it entered upon an acute stage which made it an illness from a practical point of view. One way in which this can happen is that the individual may meet with events in his life which confirm his predominating early anxiety-situations to such an extent that the quantity of anxiety present in him rises to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter VIII.

a pitch which his ego cannot tolerate and becomes manifest as an illness. Or, again, external events of an unfavourable kind may receive pathological significance for him by causing disturbances in the process of mastering anxiety, with the result that his ego is left helplessly exposed to the excessive pressure of anxiety. In this way, by shaking his belief in his helpful imagos and in his own constructive capacities and thus obstructing his means of mastering anxiety, some disappointment, quite slight in itself, can start an illness in him quite as well as an event which confirms his early fears in reality and increases his anxiety. These two factors go hand in hand to a certain extent; and any occurrence which acts in both ways at once is specially calculated to bring on mental illness.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen from what has been said that the child's early anxiety-situations are the basis of all psycho-neurotic affections. And since, as we know, analysis can never stop the operation of those situations altogether, either in the treatment of adults or children, it cannot ever effect a complete cure nor entirely exclude the possibility that the individual will succumb to a psychological illness at some later date. But what it can do is to bring about a relative cure and so greatly lessen the chances of a future illness. And this is of the greatest practical importance. The more analysis can do in the way of reducing the force of the child's early anxiety-situations and of fortifying its ego and the methods employed by its ego in mastering anxiety, the more successful will it be as a prophylactic measure.

Another limitation to which psycho-analysis is subjected arises out of the individual variations that exist, even in small children, in the mental composition of the individual

<sup>1</sup> In his paper, 'The Problem of Paul Morphy' (1931), Ernest Jones has described an instance where the occasion of illness was based on different mechanisms. He has shown that the psychosis to which Morphy, the famous chess-player, succumbed had the following causes. His mental balance depended upon the fact that in playing chess he was able to express his aggression—directed towards his father-imagos—in an ego-syntonic manner. It so happened that the person whom he most wanted to meet as his opponent evaded his challenge and behaved in such a way as to arouse his sense of guilt; and this was the exciting cause of Morphy's illness.



in question. The extent of his ability to resolve anxiety will depend very greatly upon how much anxiety is present, what anxiety-situations predominate and which are the principal defensive mechanisms which the ego has evolved in the early stages of his development—in other words, upon what the structure of his mental disturbance in childhood has been.<sup>1</sup>

In fairly severe cases I have found it necessary to carry on analysis for a long time—for children from five to thirteen years old, between eighteen and thirty-six working months,<sup>2</sup> and for some adults longer still—before the anxiety had been sufficiently modified, both in quantity and quality, for me to feel justified in ending the treatment. On the other hand, the disadvantage of such a lengthy treatment is fully made up for by the more far-reaching and permanent results which a deep analysis achieves. And in many cases a much shorter time suffices—not more than from eight to ten working months—to obtain quite satisfactory results.<sup>3</sup>

Repeated attention has been drawn in these pages to the great possibilities offered by Child Analysis. Analysis can do for children, whether normal or neurotic, all that it can do for adults, and much more. It can spare the child the many miseries and painful experiences which the adult goes through before he comes to be analysed; and its therapeutic prospects are much brighter. The experience of the last few years has given me and other child-analysts good grounds for believing that psychoses and psychotic traits, malformations of character, asocial behaviour,<sup>4</sup> grave obsessional neuroses and inhibitions of development can be cured while the individual is still young. When he is

<sup>1</sup> It may be remarked that where intense anxiety and severe symptoms are exhibited in analysis the structure of the illness is often more favourable than where there are no symptoms at all.

<sup>2</sup> I have had a child-patient whose analysis lasted forty-five working months.

<sup>3</sup> In Chapter V. we have seen how in a number of instances in which treatment had to be broken off, even a few months' analysis brought about considerable improvement by diminishing anxiety in the deepest levels of the mind.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. in this connection Melitta Schmideberg's paper, 'Zur Psychoanalyse asozialer Kinder und Jugendlicher' (1932).

grown up, these conditions, as we know, are inaccessible or only partly accessible to psycho-analytic treatment. What course an illness will take in future years often cannot, it is true, be foretold in childhood. It is impossible to know with certainty whether it will turn into a psychosis, criminal malformation of character or severe inhibition. But successful analysis of abnormal children will obviate all these possibilities. If every child who shows disturbances that are at all severe were to be analysed in good time, a great number of those people who later end up in prisons or lunatic asylums, or who go completely to pieces, would be saved from such a fate and be able to develop a normal life. If Child Analysis can accomplish a work of this kind—and there are many indications that it can—it would be the means not only of helping the individual but of doing incalculable service to society as a whole.



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